NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
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THESIS

THE CHIMERA OF THE ASEAN
REGIONAL SECURITY COMMUNITY

by

Leong H. Goh

December 1999

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In recent years, it has become fashionable for scholars to characterize the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as the first pluralistic security community to emerge outside the Western Hemisphere. In the light of this characterization, this thesis seeks to establish whether the institutionalization of ASEAN has facilitated and encouraged sufficient qualitative and quantitative transactions among its member states to qualify it as having attained the status of a tightly coupled regional security community. While much evidence may be offered of the successes of the organization, a more critical investigation into intra-ASEAN trends and transactions in the political, military, and economic dimensions raises doubts as to the extent and nature of perceived inter-relationships. Although, over the thirty years of the organization's history, the regional institutional context and inter-state transactions have become denser and hence more consequential on individual state behaviors, this thesis concludes that ASEAN is, at best, a fragile loosely coupled regional security community. Much remains to be accomplished before ASEAN can claim the distinction of being a tightly coupled, pluralistic security community worthy of serving as a model for other aspiring communities.

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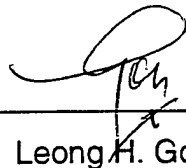B.A. (Hons), University of Cambridge, 1985

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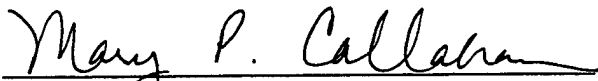## MASTER OF ARTS IN NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

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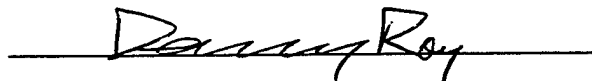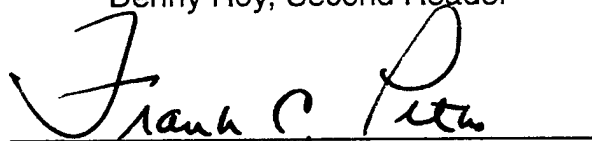## NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
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ABSTRACT

In recent years, it has become fashionable for scholars to characterize the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as the first pluralistic security community to emerge outside the Western Hemisphere. In the light of this characterization, this thesis seeks to establish whether the institutionalization of ASEAN has facilitated and encouraged sufficient qualitative and quantitative transactions among its member states to qualify it as having attained the status of a tightly coupled regional security community.

While much evidence may be offered of the successes of the organization, a more critical investigation into intra-ASEAN trends and transactions in the political, military, and economic dimensions raises doubts as to the extent and nature of perceived inter-relationships. Although, over the thirty years of the organization's history, the regional institutional context and inter-state transactions have become denser and hence more consequential on individual state behaviors, this thesis concludes that ASEAN is, at best, a fragile loosely coupled regional security community. Much remains to be accomplished before ASEAN can claim the distinction of being a tightly coupled, pluralistic security community worthy of serving as a model for other aspiring communities.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Established in 1967, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has been hailed for transforming Southeast Asia, long characterized as a region of turmoil, rebellion and conflict, into a region of peace, stability, and prosperity. Indeed, in recent years, it has become fashionable for scholars to characterize ASEAN as a regional security community — defined as a group of people integrated to the point of real assurance that the members of that community will not fight each other physically, but will settle their disputes in some other way. If this was demonstrated to be the case, it would be the first to so emerge in the developing world and would therefore serve as a useful model for the development of other aspiring regional security communities. It would also immeasurably brighten the prospects for a stable security environment in the Asia-Pacific as a whole.

This thesis seeks to establish whether the institutionalization of ASEAN has facilitated and encouraged sufficient qualitative and quantitative transactions among its member states to qualify it as having attained the status of a tightly coupled regional security community. By distinguishing between loosely and tightly coupled security communities— tightly coupled communities having achieved a high *cognitive* (i.e., characterized by a sense of community) level of mutual expectation in contrast to loosely coupled communities which are typified by essentially *instrumental* (i.e., characterized by rational cost-benefit calculation) motivations—and evaluating ASEAN trends and transactions in the political,

military, and economic spheres, it is concluded that ASEAN may, at best, be classified as a loosely coupled, pluralistic security community.

The end of the Cold War in the late 1980s generated apprehensions about the uncertain strategic environment and conflict-creation potential of the post-Cold War order at the regional level. Within Southeast Asia, major potential sources of military conflict remain plausible and can be summed up as: (1) intra-state conflicts with a trans-boundary spillover effect; (2) inter-state disputes and competition; and (3) conflicts fuelled, if not necessarily caused, by differences in major power alignments and/or alliances. Clearly, the region harbors the seeds of conflict capable of sprouting quickly and explosively given the appropriate stimulus and under the right set of conditions. Given such a volatile regional security environment, an analysis of regional trends and transactions in the political, military, and economic domains provides clues as to the extent and nature of the ASEAN security community.

Politically, the acknowledged "ASEAN Way" of conflict settlement has distinct limitations. Designed to work around contentious issues, the ASEAN process is constrained in its ability to reconcile conflicting objectives or resolve acrimonious relations among member-states because it has declined to develop effective conflict resolution mechanisms for itself. Moreover, as an organization, ASEAN does not appear to have significantly altered how individual member-states define their national interests, especially on questions of national security. Linkages between member-states—while real—are nevertheless highly tenuous

with sectoral interests often taking precedence. The tenets of the ASEAN Way, the extant nationalistic ideology, and ongoing political friction between member-states have not encouraged the development of a political climate conducive to, and broad popular participation and support for, the rise of a security community.

An examination of ASEAN trends and transactions in the military dimension reveals strong undercurrents of mutual suspicion as demonstrated by inclinations toward heightened military expenditure, accelerated armament procurement programs emphasizing high-technology dual-use weapons systems, strenuous efforts towards developing viable national defense industries, limited and conditional military interactions, and differentiated military policies and practices. The most striking feature of regional military developments—that they have resulted from purely and unabashedly national defense programs—is strongly suggestive of the fact that the present sentiment within ASEAN members remains essentially oriented towards nationalism as opposed to regionalism.

The relationship between economic development and security has traditionally played a large part in Southeast Asian security and unity deliberations. Notwithstanding the various economic initiatives ASEAN has embarked upon, the contribution of regional economic cooperation and interdependence to the emergence and maintenance of ASEAN as a regional security community could be overstated. The realization of an ASEAN incorporating all ten states comprising Southeast Asia has also increased the risks to peace posed by more aggressive economic competition and shifts in relative power. The recent Asian

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financial crisis has undermined the view that growing economic interdependence will prevent international conflict, increased uncertainty in the region's security outlook, challenged regional cohesion, and exposed underlying suspicions and animosities that can only serve to weaken ASEAN.

Overall, while war may apparently be an increasingly unattractive option for Southeast Asian political elites, their articulations and behavior under various political and economic conditions makes war between ASEAN members conceivable. The conclusion derived from an investigation of organizational trends and transactions is that regional cooperative and integrative efforts are directed primarily at the functional level. The many areas of contention, the lack of a shared vision for the region, and staunchly realist outlooks all point to ASEAN remaining a fragile loosely coupled regional security community at least for the present.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I. INTRODUCTION

Quixotic hopes and plans for establishing international harmony and peace have punctuated the history of the twentieth century. Within Southeast Asia, these hopes have been embodied in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). With all the ten countries of Southeast Asia becoming members of ASEAN, the world had been anticipating that the region would face the twenty-first century as an increasingly cohesive entity, economically vibrant and with greater political leverage than ever before.

Since ASEAN's formation in 1967, regional commentators have hailed the organization for transforming Southeast Asia, long characterized as a region of turmoil, rebellion and conflict, into a region of peace, stability, and prosperity. Indeed, in recent years it has become fashionable for scholars to characterize ASEAN as the first pluralistic security community to emerge outside the Western Hemisphere.

A. THESIS

The proposition put forward in this thesis is that while many indicators may be offered as evidence that ASEAN has attained the status of a stable regional security community, a more critical investigation of intra-ASEAN trends and transactions raises doubts as to the extent and nature of perceived inter-relationships. These trends suggest that ASEAN may, at best, be classified as a

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loosely coupled, pluralistic security community. More strenuous efforts will be required to dispel mutual distrust and historical animosities before ASEAN can achieve the status of a tightly coupled security community worthy of emulation by other regions of the world.

B.   SIGNIFICANCE

This is a topic beyond mere academic interest since if ASEAN could indeed be demonstrated to be a stable tightly coupled security community, it would be the first to so emerge in the developing world. The processes involved in its evolution and maturation may then serve as a useful model for the development of other regional security communities.

Beyond this, as a viable security community, ASEAN would immeasurably brighten the prospects for a stable security environment in the Asia-Pacific as a whole. While the members of ASEAN account for only a modest share of the world's economic and military power, the grouping is by far the most institutionalized organization in Asia and, acting collectively, member-states have managed to exert disproportionate influence over world affairs in recent decades. It has helped to confer stability to a region that had previously been one of the most volatile and violent in the world. Within its agreed framework, the region has prospered in a sustained way that no other developing region had ever before — or since. Despite its limitations and self-important rhetoric, ASEAN has been central to the evolving multilateral framework of economic and security

cooperation through institutions such as the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum and the ASEAN Regional Forum. Specifically, Southeast Asia is of geopolitical significance in that through the Straits of Malacca and Indonesian waters pass two-thirds of the oil imported by Japan. The United States Navy also requires these shipping lanes for global military projection. More broadly, ASEAN assures geostrategic balance by providing a useful potential counterpoint to China in the region.

From an academic perspective, the study of security communities has had a predominantly Eurocentric focus.[1] Studying the viability of ASEAN as a regional security community will therefore serve as a useful contrast and provide empirical data for security studies of a region rich in diversity. Such intricacy is reflective of an increasingly complex world order, the study of which would translate into insights that may then be more applicable to a wider spectrum of countries and regions.

C.   CONCEPT OF A REGIONAL SECURITY COMMUNITY

In their pioneering 1957 study, Karl Deutsch and his associates defined a security community as a group of people integrated to the point of "real assurance

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[1] The pioneer in the field of security communities is Karl W. Deutsch whose case studies have all concentrated on the Western world. See for example Karl W. Deutsch, *Tides Among Nations* (New York: The Free Press, 1979), 179–198.

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that the members of that community will not fight each other physically, but will settle their disputes in some other way."[2] Using this proposition as a starting basis, Emmanuel Adler and Michael Barnett in "Governing Anarchy: A Research Agenda for the Study of Security Communities"[3] have suggested a theoretical framework to research into the evolution, consolidation, and disintegration of security communities.

In the ASEAN context and for the purpose of this thesis, we are concerned solely with ASEAN as a pluralistic security community which is defined as:

> ...a transnational region, comprised of sovereign states, that retains the legal independence of separate governments, possesses a compatibility of core values derived from common institutions and mutual responsiveness, and is integrated to the point that members entertain dependable expectations of peaceful change.[4]

As a means to settle interstate disputes, therefore, members of a security community neither expect nor prepare for organized violence against fellow members. Neither do they consider or undertake actions that could be interpreted by others within the community as militarily threatening.[5] What is most crucial is that they have attained a level of mutual trust that eliminates reciprocal military threats or the use of violence as a means of statecraft.

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[2] Karl Deutsch, Sidney A. Burrell, Robert A. Kann, Maurice Lee Jr., Martin Lichterman, Raymond E. Lindgren, Francis L. Loewenheim, and Richard W. Van Wagenen, *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), 6.

[3] Emmanuel Adler and Michael N. Barnett, "Governing Anarchy: A Research Agenda for the Study of Security Communities," *Ethics and International Affairs*, vol. 10 (1996), 63–98.

[4] Ibid., 66.

[5] Ibid., 76.

The distinctive character of a security community is the transition that has taken place whereby states, in principle, no longer regard or fear force as a mode of conflict resolution among members of the community. The states comprising a security community do not envisage their fellow members as relevant, in any negative way, to their security. Thus, "the security dilemma is essentially overcome not only in the short-term sense that states do not perceive the need to accumulate arms, engage in deterrence, and devise security guarantees vis-à-vis each other, but also in the longer-term more fundamental sense that states within a security community do not envisage future circumstances for which they must strategize to protect and enhance their security autonomy vis-à-vis each other."[6]

It appears that pluralistic security communities require only the following major conditions for their existence:[7]

- Compatibility of major political values;

- Capacity of the governments and politically relevant strata of the participating countries to respond to one another's messages, needs, and actions quickly, adequately, and without resort to violence; and

- Mutual predictability of the relevant aspects of one another's political, economic, and social behavior.

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[6] Brian L. Job, "Multilateralism: The Relevance of the Concept to Regional Conflict Management," Available [Online]: <http://www.iir.ubc.ca/Job.htm> [25 February 1999].

[7] Karl W. Deutsch, The Analysis of International Relations (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968), 196.

The main processes involved in establishing a pluralistic security community include:[8]

- An increasing unattractiveness and improbability of war among the political units of the emerging pluralistic security community as perceived by their governments, elites, and populations;

- The spread of intellectual movements and traditions favoring integration, and preparing the political climate for it; and

- The development and practice of habits and skills of mutual attention, communication, and responsiveness, so as to preserve the autonomy and sovereignty of the participating units, and to maintain stable expectations of peace and peaceful change among them.

Security communities can be categorized according to their depth of trust, the nature and degree of institutionalization of their governance system, and whether they reside in a formal anarchy or are on the verge of transforming it. On this basis, two ideal types are identified: loosely and tightly coupled security communities. While Adler and Barnett suggest various indicators to distinguish between loosely and tightly coupled security communities,[9] in this analysis, it is

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[8]Ibid., 201.

[9] Adler and Barnett ("Governing Anarchy," 92–94) list indicators of loosely coupled security communities as multilateralism, unfortified borders, changes in military planning, common definition of threat, discourse and the language of community. Tightly coupled security communities exhibit these indicators but in addition display the phenomena of cooperative and collective security, high level of military integration, policy coordination against "internal" threats, free movements of populations, internationalization of authority, and "multiperspectival" polity.

proposed that the principal differentiating feature is located in the level of intrinsic

trust that has developed. Loosely coupled security communities observe the

minimal definitional properties and no more — they are characterized by the

instrumental nature of peaceful change, i.e., states elect for membership within a

community as the most cost-effective means towards attaining national objectives.

In this sense, the motivations of the members of the community are essentially

selfish in nature. In contrast, tightly coupled security communities have achieved

a high *cognitive* level of mutual expectation approaching that of altruism. This

would entail the development of a social fabric not only among elites but also

among the masses, instilling in them a sense of community, which then becomes:

> ...a matter of mutual sympathy and loyalties; of "we feeling", trust, and
> mutual consideration; of partial identification in terms of self-images and
> interests; of mutually successful predictions of behavior...in short, a matter
> of perpetual dynamic process of mutual attention, communication,
> perception of needs, and responsiveness in the process of decision
> making.[10]

To determine the extent and nature of this "sense of community," a

"transactionalist" perspective is adopted.[11] Thus, this thesis seeks to establish if

the institutionalization of ASEAN has facilitated and encouraged trends,

transactions, and trust by establishing norms of behavior, monitoring mechanisms,

and sanctions to enforce those norms. It is interested in investigating whether

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[10] Deutsch et al., *Political Community*, 36.

[11] Deutsch conceived of transactions, defined as "bounded communications between one actor and another" (Adler and Barnett, "Governing Anarchy," 80), as capable of generating reciprocity, new forms of trust, shared interests, and even collective identities. Transactions, in this context, admit various types of exchanges: symbolic, economic, material, political, technological, and so on.

there has been any qualitative and quantitative extension and intensification of interactions among ASEAN members which have served to reshape collective experience and alter social wisdom, thereby bringing about convergence around a key shared expectation: that material progress and security, broadly defined, can best be guaranteed within the context of a security community.

D.   ANALYTICAL METHOD AND STRATEGY

Whether a security community exists can be tested in several ways. One might be in terms of the articulations of the political decision-makers, or the politically relevant social strata in each member country. Do they generally believe in and work towards a firm political consensus throughout the wider community, and do they think that peaceful change within this wider group has become assured with reasonable certainty? Another test would be essentially objective and operational, replacing the subjective articulations with measurement of tangible commitments, and of resource allocations made to back them up. Are specific preparations made and fortifications and other strategic facilities built up to guard against the possibility of war? Do these suggest that war against any other group within the wider community is considered a practical possibility?[12]

In this regard, the methodology employed for the purposes of this thesis is modeled after the research strategy proposed in Muthiah Alagappa's *Asian*

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[12] Deutsch, *Tides Among Nations*, 181.

Security Practice.[13] Within this broad framework, it is important to understand the structure and terms of security discourse, and the continuum of security systems.

1. Structure and Terms of Security Discourse

The structure of security is composed of five key interrelated elements which also constitute the dominant terms of security discourse. These are the referent, core values, types of threats, the nature of the security problem, and the approach to security, as summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Structure and Terms of Security Discourse

Element of Security		Illustration
Referent (Who?)		Communal, religious, or other group, society, regime, nation-state, state, regional community, world/planet
Scope/ Domain (What?)	Core Values	Political independence and territorial integrity; social harmony, internal order, political stability, national unity; sociocultural essence of nation; economic security; safe environment
	Types of Threats	Political, military, economic, sociocultural, environmental
	Nature of problem	Zero-sum, distributional, political, market failure
Approach (How?)		Competitive (self-help); cooperative security; community security

Source: Alagappa, *Asian Security Practice*, 17.

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[13] Muthiah Alagappa, Introduction to *Asian Security Practice*, ed. Muthiah Alagappa (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1998), 15–23.

2. A Continuum of Security Systems

The various approaches to security may be viewed as part of a continuum of security systems. Based on this proposition, a continuum of three ideal types of security systems—self-help, cooperative security, and community security—may be constructed. This continuum of security systems is summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. The Continuum of Security Systems

Identity Relation	Interest Formulation	Security System
Negative	Zero-sum, distributional	Competitive, self-help
Indifferent	Mutual interest, absolute gains	Cooperative security
Positive	Internationalization of national identity and interest	Community security

Source: Alagappa, *Asian Security Practice*, 56.

The emphasis of states in a self-help system is on the development of national capabilities. In a cooperative security system, while states may harbor mutual suspicious, there is no perception of an immediate threat. Under such conditions, states strive to avoid least preferred outcomes through coordination and collaboration, such cooperation deriving essentially from rational calculations of self-interest and hopes of reciprocity on the part of participating states. In a community security system, individual national identities and interests become fused with those of a larger community of states. Each state takes an interest in

the security of others with force becoming an illegitimate instrument of policy in the international relations among the states comprising the community.[14]

3.   Analytical Approach

With regard to the above discussions on the security structure and continuum of security systems, this thesis seeks to address only the 'how' element of the security discourse and to locate the position of ASEAN within the continuum of security systems. The analytical method employed is an empirical-inductive approach based on a study and interpretation of the articulations, behavior, and actions of the ASEAN regional actors. This strategy employs a statist approach focusing on the security conceptions of central decision-makers. This is appropriate in the ASEAN context since the nation-state is still the dominant expression of political community, and governments continue to be the central actors in domestic and international politics. A useful starting point for discerning how security is constructed and practiced is an examination of the formal articulations of political leaders and officials. However, to distinguish between rhetoric and actual behavior, it is essential to go beyond formal articulation to explore what central decision makers actually do—that is, how they operationalize security—and assess whether their behavior is in keeping with formal articulations and is consistent over time.

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[14] Ibid., 54–55.

Utilizing this approach and to prove this thesis, the following chapters will demonstrate that:

- The potential for intra-ASEAN military conflict is high; and

- Analyses of intra-ASEAN political, military, and economic trends and transactions leads to the conclusion that ASEAN, at best, qualifies as a fragile loosely coupled, pluralistic security community.

II. ASEAN IN AN EVOLVING REGIONAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

A. REGIONAL SECURITY DURING THE COLD WAR ERA

From the 1950s onwards, as a region in which the geopolitical, ideological and national-security interests of three great powers—the United States, the Soviet Union and China—intersected, Southeast Asia had been subject to an intensely competitive pattern of great-power involvement.[15] Such superpower rivalry had the effect not only of internationalizing local conflicts, but also of regionalizing international conflicts. Cold War cleavages in the international system contributed directly to the ideological and political polarization of non-communist ASEAN and communist Indochina.[16] These presented a persistent constraint on the development and maintenance of a self-reliant security framework for the Southeast Asian region.

Historically, approaches to regional order during this period pitted superpower-sponsored regional security structures against indigenous regional efforts. For example, the United States was the active proponent of the Collective Defense Treaty—the Manila Pact—and the Southeast Asian Treaty Organization (SEATO), while Soviet proposals called for an Asian Collective Security System. These were less than enthusiastically embraced by the Southeast Asian states for

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[15] A. Acharya, "A New Regional Order in Southeast Asia: ASEAN in the Post-Cold War Era," *Adelphi Paper* 279 (August 1993): 7.

[16] M. Yahuda, *The International Politics of the Asia-Pacific, 1945-1995* (London: Routledge, 1996), 8.

a variety of reasons, perhaps chief among these being the assessment that such propositions were aimed primarily at securing the continued predominant influence of the superpowers in the region. The uncertain credibility of superpower security guarantees, generated by experiences with superpower intervention, further rendered such proposals unappealing.

The earliest indigenous attempt to establish a regional cooperative forum was the formation of the Association of Southeast Asia (ASA) in 1961, comprising Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines. From its inception, the ASA was handicapped by the fact that Indonesia, the largest and arguably most influential Southeast Asian nation, was not a member. It further floundered over difficulties spawned by the Philippines' claim on Sabah. Similarly, Konfrontasi accounted for the demise of MAPHILINDO,[17] a loose confederation of independent states of Malay stock. The genesis of ASEAN in 1967 marked the end of Indonesia's policy of Konfrontasi against Malaysia, and arguably survived only because of a common threat perception of communist insurgency, and Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia. In a perverse sense, however, the emergence of ASEAN, instead of fostering regionalism, accentuated existing regional polarizations since Vietnam viewed the organization as a front for a Western alliance with containment ideologies. From ASEAN originated the concept of ZOPFAN (Zone of Peace, Freedom, and Neutrality) and the notion of regional resilience.

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[17] MAPHILINDO is an acronym taken from the first parts of its member states — Malaya, the Philippines, and Indonesia.

These two approaches to regional security—superpower-sponsored structures and indigenous efforts—were in perpetual conflict and constantly undermined each other. Notwithstanding this, until the late 1980s, ASEAN had little choice but to bow to pragmatism and allow regional order and conflict-resolution to be largely dictated by great-power priorities and policies.[18]

Thus, the Southeast Asian regional security order during the Cold War era combined elements of both insecurity and stability. While ASEAN's ability to exert any significant influence over external issues affecting regional order was limited, a degree of predictability existed. Great-power competition provided a framework for conflict management, preventing the emergence of any single ascendant hegemonic power, and provided a security umbrella that contributed to domestic stability and economic growth.

B.   THE POST-COLD WAR SECURITY CALCULUS

The end of the Cold War in the late 1980s, followed in 1991 by the disintegration of the Soviet Union itself, signaled the end of an era that had been distinguished and defined by a central strategic balance spanning the world. This was perceived as a mixed blessing by Southeast Asian countries. While substantially reducing global tensions and settling regional conflicts at the international level, it created apprehensions about the uncertain strategic

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[18] Yahuda, 8.

environment and conflict-creation potential of the post-Cold War order at the regional level. In fact, this new era has been popularly alluded to as the "new world disorder" as decision-makers and scholars continue to struggle with the intricacies of emerging structural patterns of international politics and security.

Amongst the incertitude and wide diversity of viewpoints, it is possible to identify three major accompanying changes that have been of particular consequence in altering the complexion of the Southeast Asian regional security situation. These were: (1) a perceived diminishing of the U.S. regional interests; (2) ASEAN reconciliation with Vietnam and subsequent membership expansion; and (3) the re-emergence of China as a potential great power.

1. Perceived Diminishing of the U.S. Regional Interests

The disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 and its replacement by Russia signified the end of much of her significance and influence in the Asia-Pacific region as a whole. Lacking sufficient economic weight and steadily losing its military prowess, Russia has declined absolutely as a power capable of shaping events throughout the region. Russia's role in contemporary Southeast Asia can only be considered to be marginal at best. Although it continues to be a source of advanced weaponry and maintains a presence using Vietnam as a conduit, there is no doubt that Russia has declined to being a minor player in regional affairs.[19]

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[19] Russia has removed all but a small segment of its naval and air units stationed at its main Southeast Asian military facility at Cam Ranh Bay, although it reportedly signed a military pact with Vietnam in October 1998 and has indicated that negotiations are ongoing for extending the lease of Cam Ranh Bay beyond the present 2004 expiration date.

Although the United States emerged as the apparent victor of the Cold War, it seemingly had neither the strength, the will, nor the vision to establish what it briefly invoked as the "new world order."[20] In bringing to an end forty years of the policy of containment, the U.S. was bereft of any definitive guidelines for understanding the new epoch. Neither did it appear to have a coherent strategy around which to organize its foreign policies. Although it was by far the most dominant power in the Southeast Asian region, the U.S. was perceived by regional countries to be retreating into a gradual state of withdrawal. A combination of economic, natural, and political circumstances eroded the confidence of Southeast Asian friends and allies and brought into question the depth of American commitment.

The U.S. decision to establish relations with the People's Republic of China while downgrading ties with Taiwan as a means of helping to extricate the United States from Vietnam in the 1970s, and its subsequent announcement that troop strength in Korea would be significantly reduced, were certainly factors in this process of confidence erosion. It demonstrated the *realpolitik* of U.S. policy and the significant effect of American public opinion on its foreign policy.[21] The psychological impact of the U.S. withdrawal from the Philippines in the early 1990s has been far-reaching and deep-seated. Even to this day, there are some in political and military establishments around Southeast Asia who believe that the

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[20] Yahuda, 255.

[21] Ibid., 2.

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United States simply packed up and left when it got too expensive and burdensome to maintain those bases.[22] Within the United States itself, there appeared to be dichotomous views about this disengagement. Although the then Commander of the U.S. Pacific Forces asserted that the loss of bases in the Philippines could be compensated by increasing access to other regional facilities,[23] other senior Pentagon officials expressed the fear that the loss of the bases "would eliminate real combat capability" and "initiate destabilizing actions by regional powers."[24]

Although the United States has constantly sought to reassure its allies and friends on its resolve to retain adequate military force in the region, doubts persist. It is recognized that irresistible pressures for further withdrawals could arise sparking a possible scramble by regional powers to fill the ensuing power vacuum. China, Japan, and, to lesser extent, India have been identified as potential regional hegemons. This possible shift from superpower to regional-power rivalry is the basis of current security debates within the region. The implicit consensus is that by seeking to balance one another, regional powers may engage in a

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[22] L. M. Wortzel, *The ASEAN Regional Forum: Asian Security Without an American Umbrella* (Carlisle: Strategic Studies Institute, December 1996), 5.

[23] "Too Committed to Withdraw from Asia," *Asia-Pacific Defense Reporter*, vol. 19, nos. 2/3 (August/September 1992), 33.

[24] W. T. Pendley, "US Security Strategy in East Asia for the 1990s," *Strategic Review*, vol. 20, no. 3 (Summer 1992): 12–13.

competition that would make a multipolar regional order much less stable than the bipolar Cold War system.[25]

2.   Reconciliation with Vietnam and an Expanded ASEAN

The end of the Cold War period meant that regional conflicts ceased to be part of a larger structure of conflict involving the global powers. This meant that the pattern by which local disputants or regional rivals were tied into a structure of conflict of global dimensions was dismantled.[26] This localization of regional conflicts is clearly manifested in the case of Vietnam's occupation of Cambodia. The basis of settlement emerged after the disengagement of the Soviet Union in 1988–89 that effectively detached the conflict from Soviet-American and Soviet-Chinese relations. Deprived of Soviet support, the Vietnamese had little alternative but to remove their forces from Cambodia and to embark on peace negotiations. Vietnam's unconditional withdrawal from Cambodia in 1989 and the Paris Peace Agreement of 1991 ushered in a broader process of *rapprochement* between ASEAN and the Indochinese states.

The inception of this process of reconciliation can be traced to 1986 when Vietnam initiated reforms under a policy of *doi moi* or "renovation." Aimed at creating a market mechanism economy, this required adjustments to foreign relations to improve the political climate for economic ties with ASEAN. A similar process was taking place in Laos. Such encouraging developments prompted

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[25] Acharya, 13.

[26] Yahuda, 263.

lofty visions of "an era in which, for the first time, Southeast Asia would be truly peaceful and truly free to deal with its problems in terms of its own aspirations rather than in terms of major-power rivalry and contention; an era marking the beginning of a new Southeast Asia, capable of addressing itself to the outside world with commensurate authenticity and able to arrange its internal relationships on the basis of genuine independence, equality and peaceful cooperation."[27] *Rapprochement* appeared complete with the 1992 Singapore Declaration that envisaged ASEAN forging a closer relationship and cooperation with the Indochinese countries. As a first step, ASEAN invited all Southeast Asian countries to sign the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC), with Vietnam and Laos being the first signatories.

Since then, in order to promote the notion of both regional stability and autonomy in the new world order, ASEAN has actively sought the assimilation of former communist states in the region, the threat of which in the 1960s constituted the *raison d'être* for the organization's formation. In 1995, Vietnam joined the grouping, whilst the culmination of the vision of an "ASEAN-10" incorporating all ten states comprising Southeast Asia was planned to occur at the Association's thirtieth anniversary in July 1997 when Laos, Cambodia, and Myanmar would be formally embraced.[28] Subsequently, the entry of Cambodia was delayed after Hun

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[27] Text of statement by Ali Alatas, Indonesian Minister for Foreign Affairs and Co-Chairman of the Paris Peace Conference on Cambodia, 23 October 1991, 4.

[28] M. L. Smith and D. M. Jones, "ASEAN, Asian Values and Southeast Asian Security in the New World Order," *Contemporary Security Policy*, vol. 18, no. 3 (December 1997), 146.

Sen's coup in 1997, and it was only in 1999 that ASEAN admitted Cambodia into the ASEAN fold after a partial sense of internal political order had been restored.

While recent events have demonstrated that order remains precarious in Cambodia, it is clear that the country has ceased to be at the fulcrum of regional and international concerns in Southeast Asia. In the wake of this, ASEAN has been challenged to seek an alternative focus of its efforts to maintain its standing as a viable regional organization. Moreover, it has to contend with the inherent complications of expansion. Many questions remain unanswered: "Will enlargement make ASEAN's consensus-based decision-making unworkable? Should ASEAN change its policy of non-involvement in the internal affairs of its members? Will new members bring with them policies that were unacceptable to others? Will ASEAN become a two-tier organization, divided between its wealthy older members and the poor Indochina countries and Myanmar?"[29] In a sense, ASEAN has turned full circle, but with a difference. Despite the obvious diversity in the original core members' historical, political, ethnic, religious, and linguistic backgrounds, the overarching similarities of the member-states' political economies and security perceptions made ASEAN possible. In an expanded ASEAN, cohesion will be sorely put to the test as leaders from a widely disparate mix of political interests, economic practices, cultures, styles, bilateral irritations, and external ties seek consensus. The grouping will now have to re-negotiate the

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[29] John Funston, "ASEAN Out Of Its Depth?" *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, vol. 20, no. 1 (April 1998), 26.

arduous relationship-building paths that have been trod before — this time, however, the challenges are fraught with a greater degree of potential pitfalls.

3.   A Resurgent China

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Southeast Asian commentators appeared concerned that the People's Republic of China's potentially dominating role, in combination with a U.S. strategic withdrawal, could provide the impetus for Japan to adjust its security doctrine, with serious repercussions for the remaining states in the region. However, given the U.S. commitment to maintain its core bilateral alliances, albeit at reduced levels, and the domestic constraints on any fundamental revision to Japan's defense doctrine and posture, it has been the possible effects of the rise of China in the post-Cold War era that have received the most attention. This is an inevitable consequence of the scale of China's economic transformation, but it also relates to its size, vast population, the large number of borders shared with other countries, its strategic nuclear capacity, and the numerical superiority of its armed forces. Moreover, China has been involved in the use of force with neighboring states on a number of occasions since 1949 and it carries the burden of past adherence to a transnationalist doctrine that implied intervention in other countries. Finally, it has an unsatisfied irredentist agenda with respect to the island of Taiwan and territory in the South China Sea.[30]

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[30] R. Foot, "China in the ASEAN Regional Forum," *Asian Survey*, vol. XXXVIII, no. 5 (May 1998), 425–426.

China was a late Cold War ally of ASEAN. It terminated support for local insurgencies in the 1980s and allied itself with ASEAN against Vietnam's occupation of Cambodia. While most ASEAN governments welcomed normalized relations with China and its role in offsetting Soviet military presence, they were also cognizant of China's pre-colonial era tributary relationships and post-revolutionary efforts to undermine non-communist rule.[31] Freed of the Soviet military threat, and with a vast and fast growing economy, China's leaders have pursued a policy of good neighborliness with a view to enhancing their country's economic integration into the region. While the rise of China, propelled by economic reforms that have led to sustained high growth, has presented Southeast Asian countries with extensive opportunities for markets and investment, its size and growing assertiveness continue to threaten ASEAN's interests if only because of proximity. Uncertainty and disquiet exist as to how China will behave in its new augmented role, and concern prevails as to how to adapt to a nationally assertive and militarily modernizing China. There is no modern model for Chinese political relations with its southern neighbors, and ASEAN members wonder what adjustments they will have to make to accommodate its power. Part of this apprehension is the perception that China moves suddenly and unpredictably, and China's protestations of peaceful intent

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[31] L. Breckon, *The Security Environment in Southeast Asia and Australia, 1995-2010* (Virginia: Center for Naval Analyses, March 1996), 43.

are often regarded skeptically.[32] China's future health is of perpetual anxiety to its

neighbors since "when China sneezes, the rest of the region catches cold."

C.   PROSPECTS FOR A STABLE REGIONAL SECURITY ORDER

These changes arising from the end of the Cold War have impacted

significantly on the regional security outlook in Southeast Asia. During the Cold

War era, the notion of a common internal enemy—communist insurgency in

particular—helped not only to dampen inter-state rivalry but also develop

cooperative security relationships short of formal alliances. However, in the post-

Cold War context, inter-state and external security issues have become important

in their own right, and the question of internal security in many ASEAN states is

increasingly being defined in terms of its external and international implications.

Against this regional security backdrop, it is instructive to generate potential

plausible conflict scenarios necessitating military intervention in order to frame the

context within which regional security trends and developments can be

understood. For the purposes of this thesis, the major potential sources of conflict

in Southeast Asia can be usefully summed up in three categories: (1) intra-state

conflicts with a trans-boundary spillover effect; (2) inter-state disputes and

competition; and (3) conflicts fuelled, if not necessarily caused, by differences in

major power alignments and/or alliances.

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[32] Ibid., 2.

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1.   Intra-State Conflicts with Spillover Potential

Southeast Asia is home to at least 32 ethnolinguistic groups and all the world's major religions. This tremendous diversity has led to intra-state tensions that have been endemic in many of the countries in the region. With the focus diverted from communist ideology after the collapse of the Soviet Union, religious and ethnic issues have now assumed renewed and increased significance in Southeast Asia. In turn, this has served to sustain, and in certain instances exacerbate, ethno-religious communal conflict in the region as old animosities and hatreds are both revived and reinforced.[33]

Several domestic insurgency movements within Southeast Asia have been noted for their cross-border spillover potential. These include separatist movements in Indonesia (Aceh, Irian Jaya, and East Timor), Myanmar, Thailand (Pattani), and the Philippines (Mindanao). A continuous exodus of refugees from Aceh to Malaysia remains a sensitive issue in Indonesia–Malaysia relations. Suspicions that Muslim separatists in Mindanao receive support from Malaysia have led Philippines' politicians to hesitate in formally renouncing Manila's claim to Sabah. Similarly, suspicions continue in Thailand over Malaysia's alleged sympathy for Muslim separatists in southern Thailand.

Perhaps the most potentially explosive situation is along the Thai-Myanmar border where Myanmar accuses Thailand of providing sanctuary and indirect

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[33] Peter Chalk, *Low Intensity Conflict in Southeast Asia: Piracy, Drug Trafficking and Political Terrorism* (Conflict Studies 305/306, January/February 1998).

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support to insurgent groups fighting against the military regime in Myanmar.[34]

More than 100,000 mostly Karen refugees, fleeing what they charge is an ethnic cleansing campaign conducted by Myanmar's military, are living in camps inside Thailand that Myanmar claims serve as staging areas for armed dissident ethnic rebel attacks. Myanmar offensives against these rebel armies regularly spill over across the border to refugee camps that are raided and torched. Thailand, for its part, has accused Myanmar of spying, recently arresting more than a dozen suspected Myanmar military spies in border provinces.[35] Such incursions, allegations, and counter-allegations have strained relations between the two countries.

The role of religious extremism as a threat to regime stability in Southeast Asia focuses on the political influence of Islam of which there have been signs of recent resurgence. This is especially so in the Muslim majority nations of Indonesia and Malaysia. For example, surging support for the *Parti Islam Se-Malaysia* in Malaysia, which controls the state of Kelantan and remains committed to establishing an Islamic nation, is evidenced in the recent 20 percent jump in its membership and heightened public profile following Malaysia's economic slump and political crisis sparked by the imprisonment of the former deputy Prime

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[34] Bertil Litner, "Collective Insecurity," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 3 December 1992, 22–23.

[35] Micool Brooke, "Myanmar's Armed Forces and Their Ongoing Campaigns," *Asian Defense Journal* 3/99, 12.

Minister Anwar Ibrahim.[36] With the opening up of Indonesia following the fall of President Suharto, numerous Muslim political parties have sprung up, raising the specter of militant Islam in the country and perhaps spreading to the entire region. Already, clashes along religious lines, principally between Muslims and Christians, have become a common feature on the Indonesian landscape. Although the present governments continue along the path of moderation and non-discrimination in religious practices, future circumstances may tempt the reemergence of policies favoring the majority in order to reestablish political legitimacy. This may undermine regional plurality and invite intervention by neighboring ASEAN states fearful for their own future stability and sovereignty.

2.   Inter-State Disputes and Competition

In post-Cold War Southeast Asia, a broad range of territorial disputes has gained prominence in potentially destabilizing intra-ASEAN relations. The main source of this issue is that many of today's independent Southeast Asian nations are successor states to what were merely parts of the same kingdom or empire in earlier historical times. The arbitrary demarcation of boundaries, together with the introduction of Western legalisms about sovereignty and the state, have left a legacy of quite intense territorial disputes in the region. Contentious inter-state territorial and order disputes in Southeast Asia include the Malaysia–Singapore dispute over the island of Pedra Branca off the coast of Johore; the Malaysia–

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[36] Murray Hiebert, "Signs of the Times," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 1 July 1999, 17–18.

Indonesia dispute over the Sipadan and Ligitan islands in the Sulawesi Sea near the Sabah–Kalimantan border; the Thailand–Malaysia dispute regarding their common border; the Malaysia–Brunei dispute over Limbang; and the lingering Philippines–Malaysia dispute over Sabah. A tense showdown between Thai and Myanmar troops was averted when calmer heads among senior commanders prevailed, and both sides agreed to fall back from two disputed islands in the Moei River pending discussions.[37] Residual friction from the Cambodian government's belief of Thailand's active support of the Khmer Rouge has been overtaken by a new dimension with the Cambodian government's desire for a return of the territory which it claims Thailand annexed at the height of its involvement in supporting the anti-government guerillas in the 1980s.[38] Historical border issues have also molded Thailand's relations with Laos, causing deep bitterness in times of conflict. Arguments about the border led to an altercation in 1984 in three villages between Uttaradit and the central Lao province of Sayaboury, and more serious clashes three years later at Ban Rom Klao in Phitsanulok, which Laos claims is also part of Sayaboury.

Additionally, contests in the maritime arena over issues such as boundary demarcation, exclusive economic zones, fishing rights, and resource exploitation have increased with the ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Law of

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[37] Micool Brooke, "Military Fights to Stay Combat Ready," *Asian Defense Journal* 11/98, 10.

[38] Mark Rolls, "Thailand's Post-Cold War Security Policy and Defense Program," *Contemporary Security Policy*, vol. 15, no. 2 (August 1994), 101.

the Sea. Indeed, within largely maritime Southeast Asia, 12 of the 15 possible

maritime boundaries in the South China Sea are in dispute, and some have led to

inter-state tensions bordering on violence, mostly related to fishery. These have

caused considerable tensions between disputing parties. In early 1999, Myanmar

protested two alleged intrusions by Royal Thai Navy warships into its waters, just a

week after a Thai warship traded gunfire with two Myanmar Navy frigates. The

conflict brought into focus the lingering dispute over three limestone outcrops in

the Andaman Sea off the coast of Ranong.[39]

Another security dimension involves national assurance of access to scarce

resources. Rapid population growth, urbanization, and industrialization will put

ever-increasing demands on the earth and its resources. We would do well to

heed the warning that:

> If the population surge continues to outpace improvements in agricultural
> productivity and if industrialization drives up the cost of resources...,
> additional land will become desirable and perhaps, for some states,
> indispensable. As the value of land increases, so too does the value of the
> primary means of taking and holding it: diminishing returns in the economy
> imply increasing returns to the military.[40]

In Southeast Asia, competition for resources, especially energy and water,

may prove particularly troublesome. Today, many disagreements over territorial

frontiers are directly linked to establishing ownership over energy resources,

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[39] Brooke, "Myanmar's Armed Forces and Their Ongoing Campaigns," 11.

[40] John Orme, "The Utility of Force in a World of Scarcity," *International Security*, vol. 22, no. 3 (Winter 1997/98), 165.

particularly the control of sea-lanes for oil from the Persian Gulf.[41] The United

Nations and the World Bank have also warned that depleting supplies of fresh

water needed for a mushrooming global population could result in nearly half the

world having insufficient water by 2050,[42] access to this scarce commodity thus

being a major potential source of conflict. In Southeast Asia, proposed Thai plans

to drain supplies from the Salween and Moei rivers which delimit its border with

Myanmar[43] and the long-standing issue of Malaysian-supplied water to Singapore

are examples of such conflict potential associated with scarce resources which

continues to loom large in regional security calculations.

3.   Differences in Major Power Alignments

As ASEAN enters its fourth decade with its membership doubled from the

founding group, it faces the challenge of integrating a widely diverse membership

into a regional program of functional cooperation. At the same time, it must

mobilize its membership to common ASEAN positions with respect to extra-

regional relations. This will become increasingly difficult in an expanded ASEAN.

Clearly, one of the powers which is entrenched within the Southeast Asian

security environment and which weighs heavily in the regional strategic equation is

the United States. Among all the great, and potentially great, powers, there is no

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[41] Ibid., 165.

[42] "World Running Low on Water, Says UN," [Singapore] *The Straits Times*, 21 March 1999. Available [Online]: <http://www.straitstimes.asia1.com> [22 March 1999].

[43] "Thais Eye Water from Rivers on Myanmar Border," [Singapore] *The Straits Times*, 23 January 1999. Available [Online]: <http://www.straitstimes.asia1.com> [24 January 1999].

doubt that the Southeast Asian states see the U.S. as playing the biggest role as the regional balancer and guarantor of stability.

It is thus not surprising that most Southeast Asian countries have institutionalized bilateral defense links with the United States. Thailand has held joint exercises with American forces since the early 1970s. Singapore has a 1990 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) providing for deployment of U.S. aircraft on a rotational basis and military personnel in the country. This was extended in 1992 to encompass the relocation of a major logistics facility from Subic Bay to Singapore, and further expanded in 1998 to allow U.S. Navy ships—including aircraft carriers—to use facilities at Singapore's new naval base at Changi when it is ready at the turn of the century.[44] Since the 1980s, Malaysia has been cooperating with the United States on military matters within the framework of an agreement on Bilateral Training and Education Cooperation. Indonesia has offered ship repair facilities for American warships, while Brunei has an MOU permitting warship visits and joint training with Bruneian forces. However, tensions and anti-American sentiments have re-arisen with the perception of unwarranted U.S. interference in domestic affairs especially in areas pertaining to human rights, its apparent inertia and disinterest in assisting during the Asian financial crisis, and concerns over how long the American public would continue to underwrite the security of far-off countries of little perceived strategic significance.

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[44] "Tony Tan to Sign Pact with Cohen in United States," [Singapore] *The Straits Times*, 5 November 1998. Available [Online]: <http://www.straitstimes.asia1.com> [7 November 1998].

It is also clear that while various extra-regional countries may strive to exert some form of hegemonic intention over Southeast Asia, it is undoubtedly China that looms largest in the minds of both internal and external observers. This can be attributed to a mixture of its rising status, its aggressive claims to large tracts of the South China Sea, its proven propensity to use force to further its aims, and the large pockets of influential Chinese within the indigenous populations of the various ASEAN countries that could potentially form the nuclei for a larger "Chinese Commonwealth."

China is perhaps destined to become the world's biggest economy well before the next century reaches its midpoint. This will make China a genuine global great power. As such, it will exercise enormous influence on the international stage, most notably on its Asian neighbors. Even when it was weak, China had always been a formidable adversary whenever its interests were threatened. In its territorial disputes and its hopes for a leading role in Southeast Asia, China has demonstrated its facility for applying political, military, and economic pressures — a propensity that discomforts ASEAN.[45]

Within ASEAN, differences in opinion as to how to approach and accommodate China could precipitate a split into pro- and anti-China states. For example, Indonesia has a tradition of viewing China with anxiety, the common view being that "China considers Southeast Asia as its backyard, and we as its

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[45] J. Mohan Malik, "Myanmar's Role in Regional Security: Pawn or Pivot?" *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, vol. 19, no. 1 (June 1997), 65.

subjects."[46] A number of developments have prompted Indonesia to remind itself

of the Chinese threat. First, China's rigid and militaristic approach towards the

South China Sea dispute has not been lost on Indonesia's policy-makers. China's

early-1995 naval seizure of Mischief Reef, claimed by the Philippines, provides

compelling evidence of China's readiness to employ military means against an

ASEAN member-state. Secondly, in 1993, China published a map showing

Chinese "historic claims" enveloping the 46 trillion cubic feet Natuna D-Alpha

natural gas field although Indonesian officials declare that the claims have no

basis in international law. Similarly, relations between China and the Philippines

appear to be floundering in the wake of the ongoing spate over the 1995 Mischief

Reef incident. President Estrada has openly identified China as the biggest threat

to Southeast Asian security, and the two countries have traded allegations over

the latest incident involving the sinking of a Chinese fishing boat by a Philippine

navy vessel off Scarborough Shoal.[47] This had led to Philippine officials exploiting

the incident to bolster the government's case to push for the ratification of an

American–Philippines military-training agreement that, it is claimed, would boost

the country's defense posture, provide a "psychological shield", and help rein in

what Manila views as China's expansionist tendencies.[48] By the same token,

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[46] Breckon, 44.

[47] "Beijing is Biggest Security Threat in Region: Estrada," [Singapore] *The Straits Times*, 19 May 1999. Available [Online]: <http://www.straitstimes.asia1.com> [20 May 1999].

[48] "Estrada 'Regrets' Sinking of Chinese Vessel," [Singapore] *The Straits Times*, 26 May 1999. Available [Online]: <http://www.straitstimes.asia1.com> [27 May 1999].

Vietnam's millennial history of resistance to China, and China's ill-concealed

disdain for its former vassal, generates antipathies that will last well into the future

and add acrimony to bilateral differences. Vietnam's traditional animosity towards

its larger Chinese northern neighbor is still very much encapsulated by Ho Chi

Minh's graphic remark, "It is better to sniff French dung for a while than eat China's

all our life."[49]

On the other hand, the relationships existing between China and various

ASEAN states such as Myanmar, Cambodia, and Thailand, have grown out of a

long culture and friendship going back many centuries. In particular, close ties—

military, economic, and political—have developed between the two authoritarian

regimes in Myanmar and China in the face of international hostility following the

1988 and 1989 crackdowns on democracy movements in both countries. Massive

Chinese military assistance has enabled the Myanmar Army to expand from

180,000 men in the 1980s to 450,000 today, and has equipped Myanmar with an

array of fighter and ground attack aircraft, helicopters, guided missile boats, C-801

cruise missiles, tanks, multiple rocket launchers, artillery, small arms, ammunition,

and communications equipment. China has also assisted Myanmar in agriculture,

fisheries, paper production, hydroelectricity, and telecommunications, and has

invested intensively in a host of infrastructure and industrial projects, ranging from

dams, bridges, and roads to factories and ports. As an Asian diplomat wryly

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[49]Quoted in G. C. Herring, *America's Longest War* (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1996), 18.

noted, "Myanmar is close to being a Chinese satellite,"[50] an observation firmly reinforced by General Than Shwe's[51] remark that Myanmar perceives China's rapid economic growth as a critical opportunity spurring the further intensification of relations with "its big brother."[52] In like fashion, China is to give Cambodia US$1.5 million towards the demobilization of Cambodian servicemen, and has also agreed in principle to extend a loan of US$200 million for agriculture and infrastructure projects.[53] Ties between Thailand and China were substantially enhanced by the endorsement of an agreement, touted as the first cooperative agreement of a "comprehensive and long-term nature" between an ASEAN country and China, encompassing measures on cooperation in political, economic, security, social, scientific, and cultural areas.[54] More recently, Malaysia and China have pledged to boost defense cooperation as part of a broader joint agreement expanding political, trade, and transport links between the two countries. Aiming to facilitate an exchange of views on matters affecting the regional security architecture, cooperation would include reciprocal visits by defense officials as well

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[50] Dermot Tatlow, "China's Shadow," *Asiaweek*, 28 May 1999. Available [Online]: <http://www. pathfinder.com/asiaweek> [28 May 1999].

[51] Chairman of Myanmar's ruling State Peace and Development Council.

[52] Gary Klintworth, "China: South of the Border," *Asia-Pacific Defense Reporter* (June/July 1999), 6.

[53] "China to Give Aid and Loans to Cambodia," [Singapore] *The Straits Times*, 14 February 1999. Available [Online]: <http://www.straitstimes.asia1.com> [15 February 1999].

[54] "Extensive Pact to Enhance Sino-Thai Relations," [Singapore] *The Straits Times*, 4 February 1999. Available [Online]: <http://www.straitstimes.asia1.com> [5 February 1999].

as industry workshops to explore joint production.[55] Figure 1 is a depiction of the author's assessment of the overall orientation of ASEAN member-states vis-à-vis the United States and China.

Pro-US	Ambivalent	Anti-US
Philippines	Brunei	Cambodia
Singapore	Indonesia	Malaysia
Thailand	Laos	Myanmar
	Vietnam	

Pro-China	Ambivalent	Anti-China
Cambodia	Brunei	Indonesia
Laos	Singapore	Philippines
Malaysia		Vietnam
Myanmar		
Thailand		

Fig. 1. Balance of Power in Southeast Asia (1999).

It is therefore very clear that the interests in and attitudes of the various ASEAN members toward the United States and China are very different and that a consensual position will be difficult to achieve. In the event of relations between these two great powers souring and open hostility occurring, there would then be

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[55] "Malaysia and China to Boost Defense Ties," [Singapore] *The Straits Times*, 3 June 1999. Available [Online]: <http://www.straitstimes.asia1.com> [4 June 1999].

the potential for military conflict between ASEAN states compelled to take sides according to their existing ideologies and alignments.

D.   AN UNSTABLE PEACE

Realist views of the post-Cold War milieu warn of an unleashing of conflicts in Southeast Asia which were effectively frozen or suppressed during the colonial era and the subsequent period of superpower rivalry. The end of the Cold War was not only a portent of a greater level of conflict in the international system, it also diminished prospects for conflict management, and unleashed other destabilizing forces that can no longer be managed. Some of these forces have been examined in the foregoing discussion. Clearly, Southeast Asia today harbors the seeds of conflict capable of sprouting quickly and explosively given the appropriate stimulus and under the right set of conditions. Will such conflict scenarios come to pass, or has ASEAN in fact reached the level of a stable security community wherein the use of force against other members cannot be contemplated? The subsequent chapters will attempt to answer this question by analyzing the trends and transactions within ASEAN in the political, military, and economic dimensions.

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III.   ASEAN POLITICS AND PROCESSES

In examining the role of ASEAN in promoting dependable expectations of peaceful change, it is important to study inter- and intra-state political transactions from two aspects. The first relates to organizations as sites for active socialization and social learning. The collective identity and normative understandings so developed enable member-states to foster mutual trust and positive reciprocal expectations.[56] The second aspect is to recognize that behind every organization stand political elites who are pivotal in transforming ideas and ideals into political reality.[57] An analysis of ASEAN politics and processes thus provides crucial insights into the extent to which ASEAN qualifies as a regional security community.

Looking back over the thirty years since its inception, one common and widely accepted view is that ASEAN's political achievements have been quite remarkable by any standard. If one were to zero-in on what these achievements have been, perhaps what stands out most is ASEAN's maintenance of peace in what was once a trouble-ridden region. Fortuitous circumstances may have helped in achieving this regional peace, but certainly without the conscious and

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[56] Adler and Barnett, 81.

[57] Ibid., 81–82.

painstaking efforts put into the process by the respective member-states, this peace dividend would not have been reaped at all.[58]

Viewing the regional landscape using a different lens and from an antithetical perspective, however, does not yield such an optimistic verdict. What we would do well to take note of is the articulation of one of the major conditions governing the probability of developing security communities:

> If the load of potential frictions and conflict situations grows faster than the capabilities for their peaceful adjustment on the part of the governments concerned, mounting tensions and eventual warfare are likely to result. Conversely, if attention to, and realistic perception of, mutual needs and adjustment all grow as fast or faster than the load of potential conflict situations, then a security community...seems the more likely outcome.[59]

In many ways, Southeast Asia is, in practical political terms, still in the throes of a post-colonial era. The course of history in the region over the past hundred years has revolved around the central theme of the struggle of indigenous populations to rid themselves of Western colonialism and to build independent nations. In the post-colonial era, regional governments and peoples have had to grapple with the concept of the nation-state. This has heightened ASEAN nations' concerns about ceding national sovereignty in the name of regional cooperation and integration. Reflecting the past history of intervention by major powers, most Asians seem ambivalent about regional unity, having just secured their independence. Cultural diversity is exalted, with a drive for national identity a

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[58]Mely Caballero-Anthony, "Mechanisms of Dispute Settlement: The ASEAN Experience," *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, vol. 20, no. 1 (April 1998), 39.

[59] Deutsch, *Tides Among Nations*, 184–185.

strong force. There remain many political legacies that obstruct the stable

development of regional cooperation.[60] In addition, the nature and types of intra-

ASEAN political exchanges in the recent past has resulted in potential conflict

situations outpacing peaceful adjustment efforts. These constraints are readily

discernible in a more critical analysis of the political processes and practices of

ASEAN as an organizational whole, as well as in the political transactions between

individual ASEAN states.

A. ASEAN POLITICS AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

To a degree unprecedented for regional subsystems in the developing
world, there is a conscious effort on the part of Southeast Asian states to
avoid the use of force in settling disputes. The relatively abstract, informal,
and psychological nature of security norms and conflict regulation
procedures within ASEAN fits into the description of a regime in which...the
absence of explicit organizational arrangements and formally articulated
regional structures become less important than the attitudinal underpinnings
that support a recognized pattern of practice around which expectations
converge.[61]

Since its establishment in 1967, ASEAN has received enthusiastic reviews

principally for its ability to overcome, to a large extent, intra-regional impediments

to the Southeast Asian region's political stability, mutual cooperation, and

maintenance of regional security. While it is acknowledged that tensions still exist

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[60] Akio Watanabe and Tsutomu Kikuchi, "Japan's Perspective on APEC: Community or
Association?" in From APEC to Xanadu, eds. Donald C. Hellmann and Kenneth B. Pyle (Armonk,
New York: M. E. Sharpe, Inc., 1997), 143.

[61] Amitav Acharya, "A Regional Security Community in Southeast Asia?" Journal of Strategic
Studies 18, no. 3 (September 1995), 191.

between member-states, the prevailing consensus is that the likelihood of the states resorting to force to settle intra-ASEAN disputes is very small. ASEAN watchers assert that the regular meetings between senior ministers and officials[62] underpin the organization's most notable achievements: community building and conflict management. More specifically, ASEAN has set an example of how a regional security organization can, over the years, develop a "tangible set of...effective procedures...in policy behavior by the leaders of its respective member-states and has built up shared visions and expectations related to regional security."[63]

As a cohesive diplomatic entity, ASEAN has developed both formal mechanisms as well as informal methods of interaction that have alleviated tensions among its member-states, engendered constructive dialogue processes, and inculcated habits of cooperation and consultation. Involving the use of extensive consultation and consensus-building to develop intramural solidarity, the presupposition has been that these processes of political interaction in themselves have created the requisite social and political linkages that have altered the behavior of ASEAN member-states.[64]

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[62] Around 230 meetings are held annually under ASEAN auspices, covering subjects ranging from science and technology to the environment and culture.

[63] William T. Tow, *Subregional Security Cooperation in the Third World* (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Reinner Publishers, 1990), 14.

[64] Shaun Narine, "ASEAN and the ARF: The Limits of the ASEAN Way," *Asian Survey*, vol. XXXVII, no. 10 (October 1997), 962.

1. Formal Conflict Management Mechanisms

In terms of a formal mechanism for conflict management and resolution, the 1976 Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) provides the legal arrangement and instrument for member-states to order their relations according to explicitly prescribed principles, these being:[65]

- Mutual respect for the independence, sovereignty, equality, territorial integrity, and national identity of all nations;

- The right of every state to lead its national existence free from external interference, subversion, or coercion;

- Non-interference in the internal affairs of one another;

- Settlement of differences or disputes by peaceful means;

- Renunciation of threat or use of force; and

- Effective cooperation among members.

The TAC also provides the machinery for peaceful settlement of disputes among ASEAN members. To take cognizance of disputes, a High Council comprising representatives at ministerial level from each of the contracting parties may be convened. While such a specific mechanism for the pacific settlement of disputes is available, it is noteworthy that, to date, the High Council has never been constituted and no member-state has sought recourse to these provisions.

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[65] Article 2 of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation. Available [Online]: <http://www.asean.or.id> [2 August 1999].

2.   The ASEAN Way

The fact that the only formal and legal mechanism of dispute management within ASEAN has not been resorted to at all provides the best indication that the preferred ASEAN mode of dispute management lies outside the parameters of formal structures and institutions. This has required the development of certain perceptible processes or patterns of behavior which have, over time, become part and parcel of ASEAN's informal way of managing conflict. These patterns, broadly referred to as the "ASEAN Way," have been identified as:[66]

- Adherence to ground rules enshrined in ASEAN's diverse declarations;

- Emphasis on self-restraint;

- Acceptance of the practices of *musyawarah* (consultation) and *mufakat* (consensus);

- Using third-party mediation; and

- Agreeing to disagree for later settlement.

Adherence to ground rules and self-restraint are distinctive features of what has been referred to as the diplomacy of accommodation, and encompasses the three principles of restraint, respect, and responsibility. Restraint in this context means a general attitude of tolerance, and non-interference in other states either by war, aid to insurgents, challenges to legitimacy, or comments about personalities. Respect refers to "the willingness to forgo individualism by seeking

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[66] Caballero-Anthony, 52.

other's advice and opinion" and is displayed when member-states abide by the customary approaches to decision-making through consultation and consensus. Finally, there is responsibility, which is the consideration of other members' interests and sensitivities, and the consciousness of the impact of one's domestic policy on neighbors.[67]

Incorporation of the elements of *musyawarah* and *mufakat* means that the process of conflict management naturally tends to be a long-drawn affair involving extensive consultations on a myriad list of diverse positions, proposals, and initiatives on a single issue just to ensure that consensus can be reached. If disagreements do occur, members agree to put off a decision, or agree to disagree.[68] The value of this approach is that it allows minority and dissenting views to be aired without being dominated by the views of the majority; it accords recognition that each member-state has an equal voice, regardless of size and economic strength; and it serves to save face and maintain good relations, particularly when contentious issues have to be addressed.[69]

3. Limitations and Constraints

Despite the seeming success of the ASEAN Way, there are inherent difficulties and contradictions in this institutionalized political process which pose

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[67] Ibid., 52–53.

[68] Ibid., 58.

[69] Ibid., 59.

direct impediments to the development of ASEAN into a stable tightly coupled pluralistic security community.

The ASEAN process is about the management and containment of problems. It is a method primarily motivated by the desire to create a stable intramural environment, and the techniques employed to achieve this goal utilize the importance of symbolism and indirect approaches to conflict situations.[70] In reality, the ostensible commitment to consensus inhibits the development of ASEAN as it prevents any serious attempt to resolve any number of regional concerns. In practice, ASEAN's unified policies reflect a consensus that is usually the lowest common denominator among member-states. If the ASEAN states cannot come to a common agreement, they agree to go their separate ways, while still couching their differences in a language of solidarity sufficiently ambiguous to paper over differences. What is important ultimately is for the organization to exhibit an appearance of unity. Central to the ASEAN Way is the basic principle that "each and every action taken in the name of ASEAN must either contribute to or be neutral, but not detract from, the perceived national interests of the individual ASEAN member-states."[71] This process encouraging postponement and compartmentalization of intractable issues so as not to interfere with other areas of cooperation, means that ASEAN is not capable of *resolving* contentious issues but

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[70] Narine, 964.

[71] Bilson Kurus, "The ASEAN Triad: National Interest, Consensus-Seeking, and Economic Cooperation," *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, vol. 16 (March 1995), 405.

only of *circumscribing* them. What all this implies is that while it may be argued that the ASEAN Way has been highly successful at altering the interactions of the ASEAN states, it is incapable of altering the definitions of their national interests.

Case studies of the political history of ASEAN clearly demonstrate how conflicting interpretations of how best to ensure national security interests have undermined the capacity of the organization to manage the regional security environment. The distinct limitations imposed on the member-states' ability to cooperate have been elegantly illustrated in a study on ASEAN responses to the proposed Zone of Peace, Freedom, and Neutrality (ZOPFAN) concept, as well as to the 1978 Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia.[72]

Even though the Malaysian-sponsored idea of ZOPFAN has been formally endorsed, the concept, in practice, has assumed "the quality of a political chameleon" because it has appeared "in a different hue according to the interests of the particular Southeast Asian governments concerned."[73] Even till today, all the ASEAN states have varying interpretations of what ZOPFAN signifies and, as a consequence, the organization has made very little progress toward practical implementation of the policy.[74] One commentator has gone so far as to describe ZOPFAN as "a statement of principles that was never meant to be taken seriously,

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[72] See Narine, 961–978.

[73] Michael Leifer, "The ASEAN States: No Common Outlook," *International Affairs*, vol. 49, no. 4 (October 1973), 601.

[74] Narine, 968.

and represents what the ASEAN states understand to be an unattainable—and perhaps undesirable—objective."[75] Instead, as a compromise and in an attempt to lend substance to ZOPFAN, a treaty on a Southeast Asian Nuclear Weapons-Free Zone was concluded in 1995.

Vietnam's occupation of Cambodia was the defining issue for ASEAN throughout the 1980s. It was an issue on which member-states could apparently agree and focus their energies, and which gained the organization its international reputation as an important and cohesive diplomatic community. To many ASEAN supporters and watchers, the most important effect of Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia vis-à-vis ASEAN was that it caused member-states to forge more cooperative internal policies, put aside intramural differences, and function effectively as a political alliance. However, significant differences in perceptions of the regional security environment prevented ASEAN from being completely united in its approach to Vietnam.[76] Most poignantly, Thailand, the ASEAN frontline state confronting the communist threat, was apparently hardly influenced by ASEAN considerations in formulating its own policies. This was most dramatically illustrated by its about-face in 1988 when it declared its intention of converting Indochina from a battlefield to a marketplace. This meant offering Vietnam many of the benefits of full relations without extracting corresponding concessions on the

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[75] Tim Huxley, *Insecurity in the ASEAN Region* (London: Royal United Services Institute for Defense Studies, 1993), 16–18.

[76] Narine, 970.

issue of Cambodia — a policy directly undermining the actions and initiatives of ASEAN to that point of time.[77]

In the more recent history of ASEAN, yet another symptom of differing political agendas and latent discord within the organization's ranks was witnessed during the impasse in July 1998 over the admission of Cambodia into ASEAN as its tenth and final member. In this instance, ASEAN leaders not only failed to reach their hallmark consensus, they did not even try to maintain a semblance of harmony. Never before had members clashed so intractably and so publicly, leading many observers to even fear for ASEAN's very survival. Such was the deadlock that there was even a proposal to break with the tradition of consensus and have a vote with the majority prevailing. Even after a compromise—to admit Cambodia in a special ceremony the following year—was eventually agreed to, members conspired to give the impression of divisiveness. The "losing" proponents for immediate Cambodian entry tried to convince observers that what had not happened, had happened — Indonesian President Habibie and Vietnamese Foreign Minister Nguyen Manh Cam referring to Cambodia as a "full member." This left Singaporean Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong to clarify that Cambodia had not yet been admitted but would be sometime "in the not-too-distant future."[78] With both sides speaking at cross-purposes, the episode

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[77] Dennis Duncanson, *Strategic Tensions in Southeast Asia* (London: The Institute for the Study of Conflict, 1985), Conflict Studies 176, 18.

[78] Roger Mitton and Alejandro Reyes, "Hurting in Hanoi," *Asiaweek*, 25 December 1998. Available [Online]: <http://www.pathfinder.com/asiaweek.html> [28 December 1998].

reinforced perceptions of a weakened grouping that had lost much credibility and effectiveness.

In a similar vein, Thailand's proposal in 1998 that ASEAN grow out of its policy of "constructive disengagement" and embark on "flexible engagement" drew extensive opposition. The proposal aimed at loosening the cardinal ASEAN practice of assiduously avoiding interference in each other's politics, and encouraging member-states to comment on each other's policies when these have regional implications. The fear is that while the idea:

> may be intellectually stimulating and it could open up new vistas for ASEAN's development, but—and this is a big but—it also opens up the Pandora's box.... In fact, there will be no line at all, and no subject is taboo.... As one diplomat put it: "It will be open season."[79]

Such a deviation from the long-cherished principle of non-interference would expose the lack of shared identity and the limits of regional cooperation — a revelation ASEAN can ill afford because it cannot be sure that the institution would survive the resulting tensions.

These cases illustrate the deficiencies of the ASEAN political process. Different states define the regional security environment in different ways and the mere fact of ASEAN membership has not narrowed the gaps in strategic perceptions. ASEAN can function as a coherent international actor when member-states, for reasons of their own, can agree on a joint policy. However, if they

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[79] Lee Kim Chew, "ASEAN Unity Showing Signs of Fraying," [Singapore] *The Straits Times*, 23 July 1998. Available [Online]: <http://www.straitstimes.asia1.com> [24 July 1998].

cannot, the process of interaction within the organization provides little impetus to

formulate a consensual position.[80]

B.   INTRA-ASEAN POLITICAL RELATIONS

In the sphere of political transactions between the individual ASEAN

member-states, there are at least two factors that directly inhibit the evolution and

maturation of the organization into a stable tightly coupled pluralistic security

community. These relate to the wide spectrum of political systems to be found

within individual ASEAN states, and to their differing domestic characteristics and

practices.

1.   Differing Political Systems

Within a security community, it is expected that members share some basic

understanding on how to organize political life, and are particularly attentive to

ideas that encourage trust and are analytically tied to conflict and conflict

resolution.[81] ASEAN, however, is an unusual cohabitation of incompatible political

systems ranging from communism to monarchy to democracy. Contrary to what

some theories have predicted, there is little evidence that ASEAN membership has

facilitated the development of a common political outlook.

The quintessence of such an observation lies in the example of Myanmar.

Rather than mitigating the repressive nature of the Yangon regime, after attaining

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[80] Narine, 971-973.

[81] Adler and Barnett, 83.

observer status, the ruling military junta stepped up persecution of its political opponents, culminating in the arrest of the deputy chairman of the National League for Democracy in 1996.[82] Even with full membership in 1997, there is no empirical evidence of any fundamental change in the nature of the regime or its policies. Instead, complications have arisen with ASEAN's relationship with the European Union placed in jeopardy and cooperative ventures under the auspices of the Asia-Europe Meeting thwarted because of human rights abuses in Myanmar.[83] Future clashes for ASEAN can be expected as Myanmar continues to resort to cloaking itself under the protective shadow of ASEAN.

2.   Domestic Characteristics and Practices

Another aspect of a stable security community is that the habits and practices of the peaceful resolution of conflicts are a reflection of the member-states' identity and self-understanding. Thus, the failure of any member-state to order its domestic polity in ways consistent with community norms poses a direct challenge to its ability to maintain membership in the community.[84] In this respect, one key domestic consequence of the colonial legacy was the transformation of ASEAN political units into "multiethnic territorialisms,"[85] a fact regional

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[82] Manuel F. Montes, Kevin F. F. Quigley, and Donald E. Weatherbee, "Growing Pains: ASEAN's Economic and Political Challenges," *Asia Society*, December 1997. Available [Online]: <http://www.asiasociety.org/publications/asean_challenges.html> [23 March 1999].

[83] Lee Kim Chew, "ASEAN Has Grown Bigger But Not Stronger," [Singapore] *The Straits Times*, 30 April 1999. Available [Online]: <http://www.straitstimes.asia1.com> [2 May 1999].

[84] Adler and Barnett, 76.

[85] Alagappa, 616.

governments are keenly aware of. Political leaders are therefore extremely sensitive toward any challenge or development threatening the fragility of their civil societies, including interference and spillover effects from neighbors.[86]

Thus, for example, the rise in Indonesia of a more virulent form of nationalism—rejecting sameness and interdependence and re-asserting distinct separate ethnic and religious identities—has been a cause for extreme nervousness. The region has been disquieted by calls for revenge killings and a holy war,[87] as well as renewed activism for Muslim domination in all fields, from government to business.[88] The situation has been succinctly summarized as: "The guns might be silent in Asia...but there is an audible sharpening and slashing of machetes — perhaps a more terrifying specter."[89]

3. Intra-ASEAN Political Transactions

Whatever the political system and domestic arrangements in effect within individual ASEAN states, it is clear that "though the formal institutions of government resemble Western structures, largely because they were inherited

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[86] Kwa Chong Guan, "Asia Pacific Security Concerns: A Singaporean Perspective," in *Asia Pacific Confidence and Security Building Measures*, ed. Ralph A. Cossa (Washington: The Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1995), 71.

[87] "Call for Jihad in Ambon," [Singapore] *The Straits Times*, 4 March 1999. Available [Online]: <http://www.straitstimes.asia1.com> [5 March 1999].

[88] Jose Manuel Tesoro, "Islam's Struggle for Power," *Asiaweek*, 29 January 1999. Available [Online]: <http://www.pathfinder.com/asiaweek.html> [3 February 1999].

[89] Derek da Cunha, "Region Faces Up to New Truths," [Singapore] *The Straits Times*, 25 April 1999. Available [Online]: <http://www.straitstimes.asia1.com> [26 April 1999].

colonial legacies, the actual style of government, reflecting deeper social traditions, is authoritarian, ranging from paternalism to outright military rule."[90]

As a result, national security discourse in all the ASEAN states is monopolized by the authoritative political decision-makers, and is shaped by their values and conceptions of what they deem vital to the political survival and well-being of their community. The crucial question is, therefore, how Southeast Asia's elites of today respond to their reading of the relevant history in a present radically different from earlier historical settings. An analysis of intra-ASEAN political transactions does not afford much assurance.

Any historical analysis of the Southeast Asian region will reveal vast complexities in the nature and politics of inter-state relations. Many ASEAN states carry heavy loads of historical baggage which weigh upon and diffuse efforts at greater regional integration and resilience. Such historical experiences bring about a condition in which whatever each ASEAN country does, there are signals sent—whether intended or not—and consequences. Lack of transparency and mutual suspicion remain obstacles to intra-ASEAN political cooperation and coordination.

Within mainland Southeast Asia, for example, contemporary relations between Cambodia and its neighbors must be viewed against a long-standing background of mutual distrust and animosity. For Cambodian leaders, a basic

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[90] Ho Kwon Ping, "ASEAN: The Five Countries," in *Understanding ASEAN*, ed. Alison Broinowski (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982), 201.

immutable fact is that the continued existence of the state cannot be taken for granted. Thus, it has been noted that:

> Cambodia's fear of Thailand today centers on Thai irredentism and the "lost" provinces, but its fear of Vietnam has a firmer basis: the possibility of outright absorption by Vietnamese imperialism. Thus, although Cambodian leaders distrust Thailand, their animosity toward the Vietnamese appears to be far deeper and more widespread.[91]

Such traditional animosity between Vietnamese and Cambodians has led to regular attacks upon Vietnamese fishermen on the Mekong River and the Tonle Sap Lake, and reported killings and persecution of ethnic Vietnamese in Cambodia.[92] In a similar vein, it would be overly optimistic to expect a long 700-year history of invasion and conquest in the relations between Thailand and Myanmar to be erased instantly and thoroughly by the simple expedient of ASEAN membership.

In maritime Southeast Asia, it is perhaps the continual acrimonious relationship between Malaysia and Singapore that best illustrates the persistence of national identities and the lack of any transforming influence of ASEAN. Reflecting the mordant circumstances under which Singapore was separated from Malaysia, there have been ongoing political spats between the two countries, the most virulent being inextricably linked to chauvinistic nationalism and ethnicism.

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[91] Bernard K. Gordon, *The Dimensions of Conflict in Southeast Asia* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1966), 46.

[92] James Shinn, ed., *Fires Across the Water* (New York: The Council on Foreign Relations, Inc., 1998), 113.

Certainly, it is difficult to conceive of mutual trust and regional identity being generated by remarks such as:

> The Singapore Government should not be overly sensitive if we Malays in Malaysia are interested to know about our Singaporean counterparts. After all...we know that once upon a time Singapore did belong to the Malays.[93]

Periodic irritants have continued to mar Thailand–Malaysia ties and reflect broader political and economic developments within both countries that have altered the chemistry between the two neighbors. Although bilateral links are officially portrayed as strong, deep suspicions lie just below the surface. A flavor of these sentiments was glimpsed when, commenting on an extradition issue, the Thai magazine *Arthit*, which analysts say reflects unofficial military thinking, described Malaysia as the "enemy to the South." It went so far as to conclude that:

> There is no friendship, no honesty in the ways of the Malays. Therefore it would not be surprising if in future our southern friend becomes our new enemy.[94]

That there is scant respect for national sensitivities was graphically illustrated in Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir's public airing of uncomplimentary views on the state of race relations in Indonesia. Further, responding to comments on the arrest and treatment of the former Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, Malaysia labeled Indonesian President Habibie and his

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[93] "Malaysian Malays are Concerned for 'Brothers'," [Singapore] *The Straits Times*, 9 July 1999. Available [Online]: <http://www.straitstimes.asia1.com> [10 July 1999].

[94] Quoted in Michael Vatikiotis, "Altered Chemistry," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 30 January 1997, 16.

Philippine counterpart Estrada as "new kids on the block" and accused them of shallow political thought. In the immediate aftermath, Mahathir accused his former deputy's wife, Dr. Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, of being manipulated by Philippine President Estrada to instigate political change in Malaysia. In his typically candid fashion, Mahathir intoned, "Not Estrada, or leaders of foreign nations, using local puppets, have the right to decide the nation's future. We will defend the country's sovereignty until our last breath."[95]

Ever since taking over the reins in May 1998, Indonesian President Habibie has complained privately and publicly that Singapore had not been friendly enough to his government. His astonishingly insensitive comments on Singapore as being "the real racists," his characterization of the island republic as a "red dot,"[96] his concern over the "divided loyalties" of Indonesians,[97] and his senior adviser Dr. Dewi Fortuna Anwar's branding of Singapore as a Chinese enclave and a "fair-weather friend"[98] were unfortunate, if not provocative, commentaries.

The Philippines has also generated political friction among ASEAN member-states by referring to itself as an "orphan" in its Spratly's campaign, and

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[95] "Azizah A Puppet of Manila, Says Mahathir," [Singapore] *The Straits Times*, 2 May 1999. Available [Online]: <http://www.straitstimes.asia1.com> [3 May 1999].

[96] Sangwon Suh, "Talking Fast and Loose," *Asiaweek*, 26 February 1999. Available [Online]: <http://www.pathfinder.com/asiaweek/99/0226/nat4.html> [3 March 1999].

[97] "NS: Indonesians Will Lose Citizenship," [Singapore] *The Straits Times*, 29 January 1999. Available [Online]: <http://www.straitstimes.asia1.com> [30 January 1999].

[98] "Help is Not Just Aid, Says Jakarta," [Singapore] *The Straits Times*, 24 February 1999. Available [Online]: <http://www.straitstimes.asia1.com> [25 February 1999]. _

accusing fellow ASEAN members as being "either mute, timid or (not able to) go beyond espousal of general principle of peaceful settlement of disputes and polite words of understanding given in the corridors or meeting rooms."[99] Most recently, tension has been further heightened by Philippine diplomatic protests of various Malaysian constructions, including alleged military facilities, on the disputed Investigator Shoal and Erica Reef, developments the Philippines views as a betrayal of mutual trust and blatant violations of ASEAN agreements aimed at preventing escalatory activities in the area.[100]

C. CONCLUSIONS

In terms of political integration and conflict-reduction strategies, the aim in a security community would be to:

> (increase) each nation-state's capability for conflict management, for tolerance of threats and ambiguity, and for goal-change and self-transformation. This would require a redefinition of a nation's role in international politics, as well as a redefinition of many political roles within each country. Most often, it would also require a redefinition of the image of the world, held by the nation, or by its leaders and its politically relevant strata; and it usually would require some change in national self-perception—that is, in the politically and culturally accepted image which a nation has of itself, its values, and its goals.[101]

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[99] "'Concern' Over Spratlys Statement," [Singapore] *The Straits Times*, 27 April 1999. Available [Online]: <http://www.straitstimes.asia1.com> [28 April 1999].

[100] See Rigoberto Tiglao, "Seaside Boom," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 8 July 1999, 14; and "Second Manila Complaint to KL on Spratlys," [Singapore] *The Straits Times*, 21 August 1999. Available [Online]: <http://www.straitstimes.asia1.com> [22 August 1999].

[101] Deutsch, *The Analysis of International Relations*, 156–157.

The above discussion has demonstrated that while ASEAN may have affected how members relate to one another, it has not significantly altered how they define their national interests, especially on questions of national security. All of the ASEAN states recognize—for different reasons and to varying degrees—that maintaining ASEAN is an important national interest. However, other sectoral interests often take precedence, and only the studied flexibility of the ASEAN process has allowed the institution to endure. While this represents an achievement for ASEAN's diplomatic adaptability, the distinct limitations of the organization have been unveiled and must be appreciated.

The ASEAN Way is designed to work around contentious issues. This strategy has been essential to ASEAN's success and survival by ensuring that the organization does not overextend itself. A practical limitation of this approach, however, is ASEAN's inability to reconcile conflicting objectives or resolve acrimonious relations among member-states precisely because it has declined to develop effective conflict resolution mechanisms for itself. Linkages between member-states—while real—are nevertheless highly tenuous, especially in regard to national security issues.[102] As one ASEAN commentator remarked:

> Far too often, we have chosen to paint molehills as mountains, teacup storms as blizzards, white and black as yellow and brown. At the opposite end, we indulge in callow and colorless dialogue, refusing to engage in difficult and sensitive issues.[103]

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[102] Narine, 976.

[103] L. Ching, "In Political Debate, Too Much Delicacy Can Obscure the Issue," *Straits Times Weekly Edition* (Singapore), 10 October 1998, 13.

The ASEAN principle of non-interference is a major obstacle in the development of the organization into a tightly coupled security community. It has allowed the organization to abscond from its responsibilities for regional conflict management; and has rendered inconceivable the development of "greater policy coordination...to watch for and patrol 'internal' threats, as commonly defined"[104] — yet another characteristic of tightly coupled security communities. The ASEAN political process aptly demonstrates the prevailing sentiment that "nation states cooperate, as long as cooperation is not in conflict with national interests."[105]

The fact that ASEAN states follow their own national interests within ASEAN is not, in itself, unusual — most international organizations can be understood as instruments that further the interests of their members.[106] It is significant only in so much as it affirms that, within ASEAN, the individual's states' interests, and the identities of its peoples, are not interchangeable with those of the organization as a whole. This extant nationalistic ideology flies directly in the face of the premise that ASEAN has attained the status of a viable tightly coupled regional security community.

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[104] Adler and Barnett, 94.

[105] Leo Suryadinata, quoted in "Regional Grouping is Needed More Than Ever Now," *Straits Times Weekly Edition* (Singapore), 24 October 1998, 13.

[106] Narine, 976.

IV.   ASEAN MILITARY TRENDS AND TRANSACTIONS

Within a security community, not only has war among the member-states come to be considered as illegitimate, serious preparations for it no longer take place. The absence of a competitive military build-up or arms race involving the regional actors is, therefore, strong testament to the presence of a regional security community. States within a regional security community are also unlikely to engage in contingency planning and war-oriented resource mobilization against other members within the community. A litmus test for the existence or non-existence of a security community is, therefore, the extent to which such advance groundwork for large-scale violence between any two territories or groups of people is carried out. Beyond that, the nature of military trends and transactions within any presumed security community provides valuable clues as to how far down the evolution road such a community has traveled.

Given the potentials for military conflict existing within the Southeast Asian region as elaborated in Chapter II, what has been the response of ASEAN states? Within a regional security community, it would be expected that a greater degree of regional, as opposed to national, military resilience would be promoted. It is also likely that a greater level of military integration would evolve reflecting the presumed shared identities, high degree of trust, and a view of security as

interdependent.[107] In this regard, although ASEAN has indeed enunciated its formal commitment towards fostering greater regional resilience, it is clear that intentions may not quite be commensurate with the rhetoric. An examination of the trends and characteristics of ASEAN militaries confers important insights into just how far ASEAN has evolved as a regional security community. That there is still room for further consolidation is evidenced by the following trends: (1) a quantitative and qualitative regional arms build-up; (2) development of national defense industries; (3) limited and conditional military interactions and alignments; and (4) differentiated militaries.

A. A REGIONAL ARMS BUILD-UP

Over the past decade, there has been a continuous flow of military materiel into the region. Military expenditure grew dramatically in the late 1980s and early 1990s (see Figure 2), this upward spending spiral being due to both higher unit costs and to real expansion of military budgets and investment in indigenous defense industries. Although the rate of growth in expenditures has since stabilized or decreased (attributable mainly to the Asian financial crisis), it is clear that ASEAN states continue to place a heavy emphasis on acquiring new and sophisticated military equipment.

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[107] Adler and Barnett, 94.
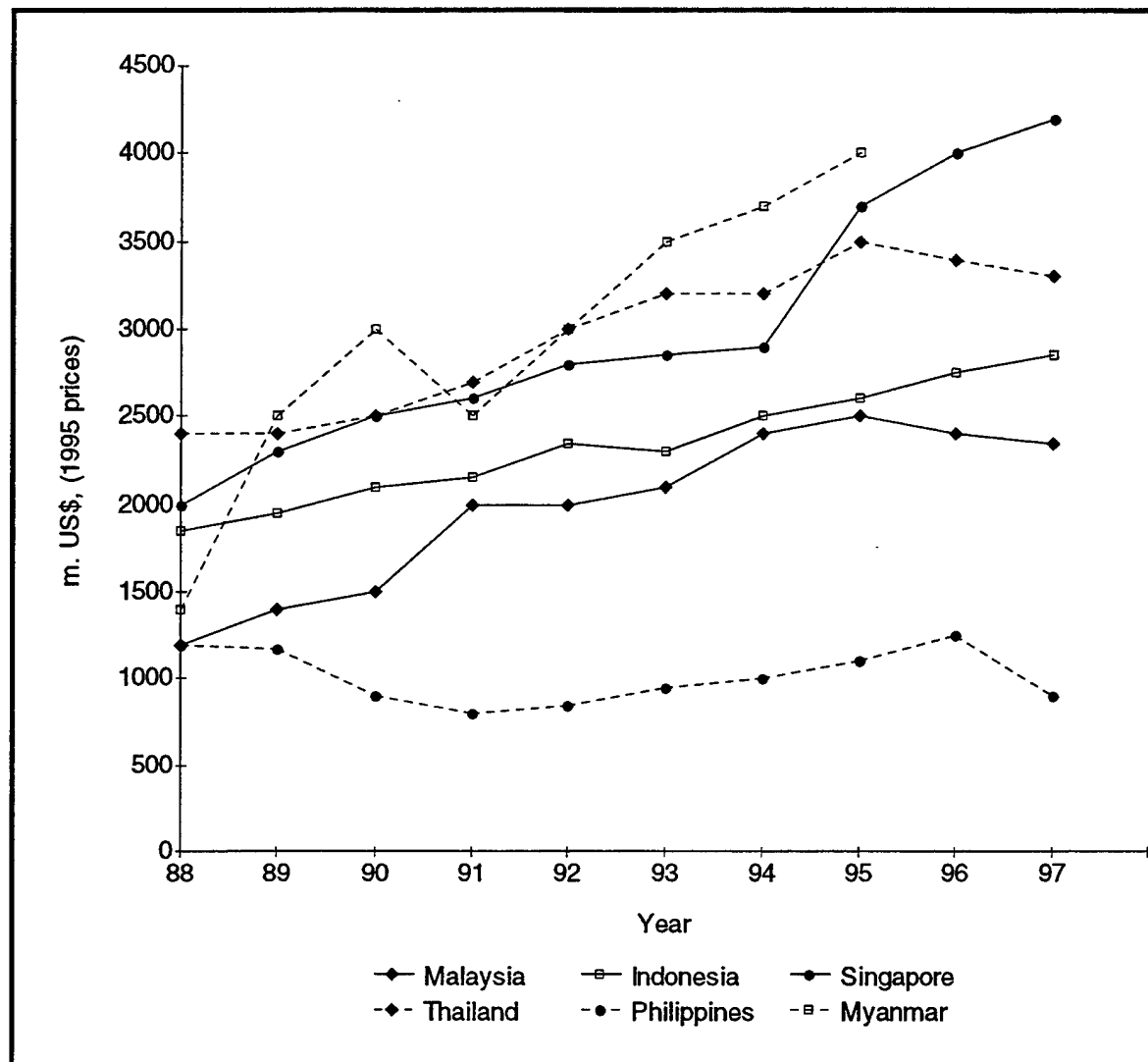
Fig. 2. Military Expenditure of Major ASEAN Countries (1988-1997).[108] Data from SIPRI Military Expenditure Database. Available [Online]: <http://www.sipri.se> [25 May 1999].

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[108] Data for the military expenditure trends for the rest of the ASEAN countries is scanty and unreliable. It should be noted that the figures are quoted in constant US dollars at 1995 prices. If measured in local currency at current prices, the upward trends are even more evident.

The recent focus on air and maritime capabilities, with both defensive-offensive capacities and power-projection implications, is an unmistakable indication of the shift in perceptions and postures from domestic consolidation to borders, neighbors, and the region as a whole. There is little argument among analysts about the acquisitions being made; the disagreements concern intent.[109]

Over the last decade, many observers have expressed major concerns that Southeast Asian countries are engaged in an arms race. The end of the Cold War, instead of producing a "peace dividend," has been followed by further and, in some cases significant, enlargements in defense allocations. Even in the midst of the Asian financial crisis, ASEAN states did not totally abandon ambitious defense programs. The Philippines has announced the setting up of a six billion-peso trust fund to finance its long-delayed military-modernization program, following Congress' authorization of 50 billion pesos to modernize the military over five years.[110] Malaysia is upgrading its recently-acquired squadron of MiG-29 aircraft.[111] Even Indonesia has continued to take delivery of previously-ordered Hawk aircraft.

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[109] David Dewitt and Brian Bow, "Proliferation Management in Southeast Asia," *Survival*, vol. 38, no. 3 (Autumn 1996), 67.

[110] "Arms Dealers Wary of Philippines," [Singapore] *The Straits Times*, 15 April 1999. Available [Online]: <http://www.straitstimes.asia1.com> [16 April 1999].

[111] "RMAF's MiG-29 To Get More Bite," [Singapore] *The Straits Times*, 12 July 1999. Available [Online]: <http://www.straitstimes.asia1.com> [12 July 1999].

Beyond simply spending more on arms, there has been a distinct shift towards more technologically sophisticated weapons systems as ASEAN states' defense programs since the 1970s have witnessed a general inclination in the direction of force modernization and enhanced conventional warfare capabilities. The most striking and disturbing feature of this shift has been the influx of weaponry such as advanced fighter aircraft, airborne early warning systems, attack helicopters, missile-armed naval platforms, and submarines. Such weapons systems, not designed to be deployed against armed insurgencies or political uprisings, have significantly enhanced the regional states' capabilities in strike warfare, long-range operations, and rapid force projection, underscoring the paradigm shift in security planning from intra-state (counter-insurgency) to inter-state and regional (conventional warfare) conflict scenarios.[112]

Thus, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore boast squadrons of top notch F-16, F-18 and MiG-29 fighter aircraft; Singapore has commenced a submarine program (albeit starting off with second-hand 1970s-generation Swedish submarines); Thailand has acquired a pocket carrier; and there are queues of miscellaneous weapons systems incorporating cutting-edge technology waiting to be delivered. The Philippines has started evaluating offers from foreign arms suppliers, in particular for three offshore patrol vessels, a radar system across the

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[112] Acharya, "A Regional Security Community in Southeast Asia?" 184. _

archipelago, and a squadron of multi-role fighters with American F-16s and F-18s, Russian MiG-29s, Swedish Grippens, and Israeli K-fir jets under consideration.[113]

Some of the significant military hardware recently acquired by selected ASEAN states is reflected in Table 3.

Table 3. Armaments Recently Purchased or Ordered by Some ASEAN Nations

Brunei	3 F-2000 missile frigates 3 CN235 maritime patrol aircraft
Indonesia	24 BAe Hawk fighter jets 12 F-16 fighter jets 52 Scorpion light tanks 2 Type 206 submarines 5 frigates; 16 corvettes 9 minesweepers
Malaysia	18 MiG-29 Fulcrum fighter jets 8 F/A-18 Hornet fighter jets 28 BAe Hawk fighter jets 5 C-130 Hercules transport planes 2 F-2000 missile frigates 2 guided-missile corvettes 27 offshore patrol vessels 62 KIFV armored infantry vehicles
Vietnam	15 Su-27 fighter jets 46 MiG-23 fighter jets Mi-24 helicopter gunships

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[113] "Arms Dealers Wary of Philippines," [Singapore] *The Straits Times*, 15 April 1999. Available [Online]: <http://www.straitstimes.asia1.com> [17 April 1999].

Table 3—*Continued*

Singapore	18 F-16 Fighting Falcon fighter jets
	Apache attack helicopters
	6 CH-47 Chinook helicopters
	4 submarines
Thailand	8 F-18 fighter jets
	18 F-16 fighter jets
	18 A-7 naval fighters
	10 Harrier jump-jets
	1 light carrier
	2 Knox-class frigates
	101 M-60A3 battle tanks

Source: Adapted from Todd Crowell, "Asia's Insecurities: How Can the Region's Nations Keep the Peace?" *Asiaweek*, 22 March 1996. Available [Online]: <http://www. pathfinder.com/asiaweek> [25 November 1998].

Perhaps the most conspicuous aspect of ASEAN force modernization in recent years has been the concentration of the procurement effort on the acquisition of systems for maritime operations. This regional maritime build-up can in part be explained by the demands for boundary maintenance and security generated by the 1992 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, and the corresponding need for greater enforcement of maritime problems such as illegal fishing and piracy. However, this has also been galvanized, to varying degrees, by governments' desires to prepare for "worst-case scenarios" of possible inter-state conflict in the region, both with fellow ASEAN members and with external powers.

Apart from modernizing their equipment inventories, since the late 1980s, several of the larger regional armies have also begun to develop rapid deployment forces that may have potential utility for both internal security as well as external defense purposes.

Indisputably, one of the main catalysts for this regional arms build-up has been the extraordinarily high economic growth rates of some ASEAN states in the 1980s and 1990s which has stimulated a correspondingly higher level of military expenditure. ASEAN states have also been quick to point out the need for greater self-reliance following a perceived decline in external security guarantees and uncertainties about the military position of extra-regional powers such as the United States, China, and Japan, as well as the opportunity to capitalize on bargains in the international arms market so as to catch up with the backlog of military requirements postponed from previous years.[114] Other explanations which have been forwarded as contributing to the build-up include domestic decision-making influences, such as the military's control over appropriations to defense purchases, inter-service rivalry, and corruption, as well as a desire to exploit the technological spin-offs of advanced weapons acquisitions.[115]

Despite such substantial increases in defense spending and acquisitions of more sophisticated weaponry, the hypothesis of a regional arms race has been

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[114] Malcolm Chalmers, "ASEAN and Confidence Building: Continuity and Change after the Cold War," *Contemporary Security Policy*, vol. 18, no. 1 (April 1997), 44.

[115] Acharya, "A Regional Security Community in Southeast Asia?" 185.

strongly rejected by the political leadership in Southeast Asia. Instead, regional governments prefer to use the term 'force modernization' to describe their military build-ups. According to this view, not only does the military build-up in Southeast Asia not pose a threat to regional stability, it may even strengthen the region's ability to respond collectively to external threats.[116]

Whatever the reasons, justifications, and assertions, threat perceptions assuredly play a major role in weapons acquisition within ASEAN. Concerns about China could be one motivation, as Zakaria Ahmad of the National University of Malaysia has noted: "The ASEAN states themselves cannot contain their giant neighbor."[117] More pertinent is the blunt commentary of the Foreign Policy Research Institute:

> Unspoken concerns about neighbors are still the biggest factor (in arms procurement). Thailand looks at Malaysia, and Malaysia has concerns about Indonesia. Singapore's worry is being a small Chinese state in a Malay sea.[118]

On mainland Southeast Asia, it has been noted that although Vietnam has withdrawn from Cambodia and Laos, it is almost certain that it has not fully abandoned its ambitions of dominating the two countries. The Vietnamese will, however, have to contend with Thailand, which will not allow them to have their

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[116] Amitav Acharya, "Culture, Security, Multilateralism: The 'ASEAN Way' and Regional Order," *Contemporary Security Policy*, vol. 19, no. 1 (April 1998), 76.

[117] Quoted in Todd Crowell, "Asia's Insecurities: How Can the Region's Nations Keep the Peace?" *Asiaweek*, 22 March 1996. Available [Online]: <http://www. pathfinder.com/asiaweek> [25 November 1998].

[118] Ibid.

69

own way.[119] It is not surprising then that certain ASEAN governments base their defense planning and military force structures to a greater or lesser extent on the need to deter, or assert, military power against one or more of their ASEAN neighbors. This is particularly clear in the case of Singapore arming itself to deter Malaysian aggression or interference; but tensions between various other combinations of ASEAN members also have important implications for the defense policies of the states involved. From this vantage point, there does seem to exist a bilateral "arms dynamic" involving a fairly intense process of competitive military procurement, infrastructural development, and operational planning aimed at maintaining the status quo.

Moreover, the rapid growth of defense capabilities in Southeast Asia must be noted for its adverse implications for the prospects of a regional security community. Many of the most recent weapons acquisitions may readily be classified as provocative or destabilizing. Dual-use technologies and weapons systems that have both defensive and offensive capabilities create further uncertainty. Such acquisitions also heighten the possibility of conflict by giving the acquiring state an incentive to use them before potential rivals achieve similar capabilities or an effective defense, or by presenting the perceived target state with a rationale to pre-empt before the new weapon is deployed. As capabilities within the region grow, intentions may change. Regional countries are

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[119] Mike Yeong, "Vietnam, Cambodia and Southeast Asian Security," *Contemporary Security Policy*, vol. 15, no. 2 (August 1994), 88.

increasingly likely to factor a military option into national bargaining positions in bilateral and multilateral disputes. Lack of transparency in defense data and interactive contingency planning carried out secretly in the region could undermine political trust. Since weapons acquisitions symbolize intent, this trend, juxtaposed with the potentials for regional inter-state conflict and the prevailing antagonistic and often combative state of intra-ASEAN political relations, is then strongly indicative of the competition and latent conflict persisting between various ASEAN members.

B.   ESTABLISHMENT OF INDIGENOUS DEFENSE INDUSTRIES

Within Southeast Asia, arms acquisitions have traditionally been dependent on sources external to the region, mainly from the United States, Europe, the former Soviet Union, and, to a limited extent, China. However, many ASEAN governments increasingly see the development of a modern national defense industry, supporting and being supported by a technologically armed force, as constituting an intrinsic part of the overall process of national modernization and industrialization. Provision for industrial offset work in the purchasing country and for technology transfer have become vital preconditions for the successful conclusion of arms contracts. Within ASEAN, such trends are most clearly discerned in Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, and Thailand.

In Indonesia, the country's strategic industries play an important role in developing technologies essential for the national economy. The Agency for

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Strategic Industries (*Badan Pengelola Industri Strategis*) is entrusted with managing state-owned strategic industries producing a range of products under license or joint production and assembly agreements. Thus, PT Pindad supplies most of the small arms and ammunition, including mortar ammunition, required by the services; IPTN manufactures CN-212 and CN-235 aircraft, and BO-105, Bell 412, and Super Puma helicopters; PT PAL constructs patrol boats up to 57m in size. Indonesia has also entered joint manufacturing and offset agreements for the purchase of major defense or defense-related items, such as in the joint production with France of Giat 105mm howitzers, and offsets for the purchase of American-made Palapa satellites and F-16 fighter aircraft, and British BAe Hawk aircraft.[120]

Singapore is arguably the region's most advanced arms producer, possessing a diverse defense industry which has the capability of producing a range of military products including ordnance, small arms, artillery, infantry vehicles, electronics, communications, and naval vessels.[121]

Myanmar has been actively developing its own arms industries since the early 1950s. In this regard, substantial progress has been made in developing

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[120] Robert Lowry, *The Armed Forces of Indonesia* (Australia: Allen & Unwin, 1996), 37.

[121] More prominent weapons systems that have attracted attention to Singapore's defense development capability include indigenously developed 155mm artillery, infantry fighting vehicles, and landing ship tanks.

infantry weapons, a range of ammunition, reconnaissance vehicles, light armored cars, and small coastal naval vessels.[122]

More recently, Malaysia has entered the fray with the awarding of a long-standing project to build a new class of offshore patrol vessels to a consortium involving Penang Shipbuilding Corporation with the intention of acquiring and establishing an indigenous naval combatant shipbuilding ability.

Even as the aforementioned defense industries have increasingly proven capable of producing a wide range of advanced weapons systems, there has been a noticeable lack of enthusiasm for joint production arrangements. Neither has the idea of weapon standardization made much progress. It appears that the similar equipment which have been acquired by ASEAN states have derived more from an interactive process rather than the result of any conscious plans. It has been claimed that the viability of an ASEAN arms industry is undermined by the different levels of defense spending in individual ASEAN states, and the divergent priorities of individual armed forces arising from differing strategic environments, perceptions, and military doctrine.[123] This reluctance towards fostering closer regional defense industrial cooperation despite the obvious areas of commonality and potential economic benefits of such an approach suggests limits to the sense of community prevalent within the grouping.

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[122] Andrew Selth, "Burma's Defense Expenditure and Arms Industries," *Contemporary Security Policy*, vol. 19, no. 2 (August 1998), 38-39.

[123] Amitav Acharya, "The Association of Southeast Asian Nations: 'Security Community' or 'Defense Community'?" *Pacific Affairs*, vol. 64, no. 2 (Summer 1991), 170. _

C. LIMITED AND CONDITIONAL MILITARY INTERACTION AND COOPERATION

Another argument for the reality of ASEAN as a security community contends that any signs of military competition in Southeast Asia must be seen in the context of evolving trends towards military collaboration. Over the years, ASEAN members have developed an elaborate and interlocking network of defense and security ties. The main forms of such cooperation include: intelligence-sharing; border regional cooperation against insurgency, drug trafficking, smuggling, and illegal migration; exchanges of personnel for military education and training at each other's military institutions; joint anti-piracy patrols; and provision of field training facilities. Moreover, despite consistently resisting the concept of a formal multilateral ASEAN military alliance, individual ASEAN states have vigorously undertaken an increasingly hectic schedule of regional military exercises, as illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4. Selected Military Exercises Between ASEAN Countries

Countries Involved	Exercise Name
Indonesia/Malaysia (Air)	*Elang Malindo*
Indonesia/Malaysia (Navy)	*Malindo Jaya*
Indonesia/Singapore (Army)	*Safkar Indopura*
Indonesia/Singapore (Air)	*Elang Indopura*
Indonesia/Singapore (Navy)	*Eagle*
Indonesia/Thailand (Navy)	*Sea Garuda*
Malaysia/Singapore (Navy)	*Malapura*
Malaysia/Thailand (Air)	*Air Thamal*
Singapore/Thailand (Navy)	*Sing-Siam*
Singapore/Philippines (Army)	*Anoa Singa*
Singapore/Brunei (Navy)	*Pelican*

Source: Amitav Acharya, "A New Regional Order in Southeast Asia: ASEAN in the Post-Cold War Era," *Adelphi Paper* 279 (August 1993), 70.

While it has been maintained that such a spider-web network of military exercises has helped to "foster greater mutual confidence and trust"[124] and "overcome suspicions and promote cooperation,"[125] it may be argued that this has

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[124] Dr Yeo Ning Hong, Singapore Minister for Defense, interview in *Straits Times* (Singapore), 25 August 1992.

[125] LT-GEN Winston Choo, Commander of the Singapore Armed Forces, interview in *Asian Defense Journal*, no. 3 (March 1989), 46.

been circumscribed in three ways. Firstly, such military exercise links among ASEAN countries are predominantly bilateral in nature. Secondly, even these bilateral defense links are not uniformly developed, with the majority of links centering on Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore. This means that there is indeed little interaction between the militaries of the majority of ASEAN countries. Thirdly, even within this trilateral core, the extent to which good military-to-military links affect the individual nation's security perceptions is questionable. It is debatable whether such ties are maintained because of their recognized inherent value, or more as an expedient façade of solidarity that can be readily and conveniently discarded if the situation warranted. That the latter view is perhaps more reflective is illustrated by the fact that bilateral military exercises are often the first to be disrupted in the event of political ties turning acerbic. An example of this is the severing of military links between Malaysia and Singapore during the early 1990s dispute over Pedra Branca. More recently, annual military talks between Malaysia and the Philippines were called off following a fall-out between the governments over remarks made on the arrest of the Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister. Similarly, out of pique at Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew's memoirs, Malaysia banned Singapore military flights over its territory, and pulled out of the military exercises under the Five Power Defense Arrangement (FPDA) at the eleventh hour.

Another aspect of military collaboration involves the intensive linkages that certain ASEAN members have cultivated with extra-regional powers in what may

be described as typical balance-of-power politics. As has previously been noted, most ASEAN states have conscientiously and consistently developed military transactions with the United States, among the most assiduous being Singapore and Thailand. On the other hand, to equip Myanmar's expanded armed forces, the ruling junta has virtually abandoned the country's traditional neutrality in international affairs and actively encouraged the development of a special relationship with China. Multi-million dollar arms packages have seen China supplying Myanmar with fighter aircraft, helicopters, naval gunboats, tanks, armored personnel carriers, field and anti-aircraft artillery, small arms, and ammunition.[126] The most recent deal in 1996 reportedly included "fiscal assistance," probably in the form of more soft loans and relaxed terms for the payment of earlier arms shipments, as well as new orders of Chinese arms and equipment at friendship prices.[127]

Although ASEAN states may assert that such extra-regional interaction ensures overall regional stability, it is nevertheless apparent that such linkages are also perceived as insurance in the event of regional—whether intra-ASEAN or otherwise—conflict. The more intensive nature of such extra-regional interactions is arguably reflective of mutual regional suspicions.

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[126] See Selth, 31, and Bertil Lintner, "$400m Deal Signed by China and Myanmar," *Jane's Defense Weekly*, 3 December 1994, 1.

[127] "Sino-Burmese Pact," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 30 January 1997, 12.

D. DIFFERENTIATED MILITARIES

Wide-ranging surveys of state militaries have revealed that, in a majority of cases, militaries have served chiefly to divide a citizenry along either class or ethnic lines, and that in many instances, militaries have become intimately identified with one (normally the majority) ethnic group which dominates its ranks and controls its policy decision-making processes.[128] This observation is borne out in an examination of most of the Southeast Asian militaries where differentiation particularly along ethnic lines certainly exists. While a range of explanatory factors may be advanced to account for this state of affairs, within the framework of security communities, such differentiated militaries may be a reflection of distrust of minority loyalty in the event of conflict with neighboring ASEAN members.

The primary divide within ASEAN militaries is that between perceived immigrant Chinese and the indigenous population, chiefly Malays. Thus, while Malaysia has an outward policy of encouraging proportional ethnic representation within the ranks of the Malaysian Armed Forces, the proportions of Chinese fall far below the national ethnic distribution ratios. Recently, in "refuting" opposition allegations that religious freedom is restricted for non-Muslims in the Royal Malaysian Navy (RMN), the Malaysian Defense Minister revealed that the RMN had enlisted 69 recruits in 1999 to date, including two Indians, one Chinese and

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[128] Cynthia Enloe, "Ethnicity in the Evolution of Asia's Armed Bureaucracies," in *Ethnicity and the Military in Asia* (London: Transaction Books, 1981), 2.

one from the "other-races" category, a trend mirroring that in previous years.[129]

More significant is that even fewer Chinese officers have been appointed to any positions of consequence. Similarly, very few Chinese-Indonesians have made any impact in the Indonesian armed forces, a fact implicitly acknowledged by President Habibie.[130] In Brunei, a sizeable minority Chinese population (estimated at between 25–30 percent of the total population) is not allowed to serve in the armed forces.

While it has been argued that such low incidences of ethnic Chinese representation in national defense forces can be attributed to other factors, the principal contributor being traditional Chinese disdain for military service and preference for careers in trade and commerce, it is also probable that the questionable allegiance of such minorities pose a security concern for national leaders. While such concerns may be focused on the internal domestic security situation, ASEAN leaders are also keenly aware of the potential dangers with regard to external conflict, especially with adversaries which minorities may identify more closely with.

The classic example of such externally oriented concerns involves Singapore and Malaysia. Until very recently, Singaporean leaders had continued

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[129] "Religious Freedom: No Curbs in Navy, Says KL Minister," [Singapore] *The Straits Times*, 17 July 1999. Available [Online]: <http://www.straitstimes.asia1.com> [17 July 1999].

[130] "Habibie on Ethnic Chinese," [Singapore] *The Straits Times*, 10 February 1999. Available [Online]: <http://www.straitstimes.asia1.com> [12 February 1999].

to be haunted by the Trojan horse dilemma with regard to inducting Malays into the military. These anxieties were articulated as:

> If there is a conflict, we don't want to put any of our soldiers in a difficult position where his emotions for the nation may be in conflict with his emotions for his religion.... We don't want to put anybody in that position where he feels he is not fighting a just cause, and, perhaps worse, maybe his side is not the right side.[131]

In a similar vein, although domestic reasons account for the Myanmar armed forces being composed almost entirely of ethnic Burmans (who constitute 68 percent of the population), it is likely that such ethnic differentiation will continue given the traditional and ongoing animosity between Thailand and Myanmar, and Thailand's historical record of supporting Myanmar's ethnic minorities in insurgency campaigns.

E. CONCLUSIONS

The strong realist tradition and the nationalistic inclinations of ASEAN governments have been amply demonstrated in the context of the military trends and transactions that have been examined. An inclination towards increased military expenditure in times of plenty, accelerated armament procurement programs emphasizing high-technology dual-use weapons systems, strenuous efforts towards developing viable national defense industries—all uncoordinated at the regional level—together with fairly limited and conditional military interactions

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[131] Lee Hsien Loong, quoted in Alon Peled, A *Question of Loyalty* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), 123.

and differentiated military policies and practices, are all indicative of strong undercurrents of mutual suspicion and a lack of transparency among respective ASEAN countries. The most striking feature of recent military developments in the ASEAN region—that they have resulted from purely and unabashedly national defense programs—is strongly suggestive of the fact that the present sentiment within ASEAN members remains essentially oriented towards nationalism as opposed to regionalism.

There does not appear to be any common definition of threat, as would have been expected from self-identification, this frequently having a corresponding "other" representing the threat. It is doubtful that national "worst-case" military scenarios discount fellow ASEAN members as potential enemies. Resistance to greater regional military collaboration and integration attest to continuing mutual suspicion and mistrust.

Taken together, an evaluation of the military trends and transactions within ASEAN indicate that the nature of organizational security cooperation is more instrumental as opposed to any significant cognitive transition having taken place.

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V.   ECONOMIC TRENDS AND TRANSACTIONS

Over most of the 1990s, there has been an unprecedented "econophoria" when Southeast Asia is mentioned. From 1965 to 1995, regional per capita income rose about fourfold, and, by mid-1997, the region—with the exception of Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar—had become a showpiece for economic success, political stability, and social cohesion. The five founding members of ASEAN—Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand—experienced impressive rates of economic growth, with real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth for the five countries as a group swelling from $332.1 billion in 1987 to $702.2 billion, an impressive increase of 111.4 percent.[132] This phenomenal economic growth has underpinned the region's strategic stability and fuelled optimism that the region would play a leading role into the new millennium. It has also led to suggestions that such strong economic growth has contributed immeasurably to strengthening links between ASEAN member-states, and hence consolidating the organization as a viable security community.

A.   THE BENEFITS OF ASEAN ECONOMIC COOPERATION

From its inception, ASEAN had assigned top priority in the listing of its aims and objectives to cooperation in the economic, social, and cultural fields. Of

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[132] Defense Economic Trends in the Asia-Pacific 1997 (Canberra: Defense Intelligence Organization, 1997), Table 23.

these, economic cooperation was clearly considered to be the most important and politically the least threatening. Apart from the intrinsic economic benefits anticipated, a major reason for pursuing economic cooperation was the view that this not only paved the way for collaboration in other domains, but was indeed an essential precondition for the achievement of objectives in those other areas.[133] This outlook was concisely expressed in assertions that it was "axiomatic that economic cooperation is often the most durable foundation upon which political and cultural cooperation can be built,"[134] and that:

> The ideal condition would be achieved by creating a stable domestic order that would encourage fruitful economic development. In turn, this economic growth would reinforce the underlying political order.[135]

In accordance with these beliefs, all the ASEAN states have devoted huge budgets to building, consolidating, and improving the productivity levels of their populations, to improving infrastructure, and to increasing the competitiveness of their domestic products.

New intra-ASEAN business and investment projects have continuously been introduced with transnational economic cooperation assuming two major forms. The first has been in the area of trade liberalization measures, the

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[133] Roger Irvine, "The Formative Years of ASEAN: 1967–1975," in *Understanding ASEAN*, ed. Alison Broinowski (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982), 13.

[134] Tun Ismail, "A New Era of Regional Cooperation," address to the Foreign Correspondents' Club, Johore Bahru, 23 June 1966.

[135] Michael Leifer, *The ASEAN Regional Forum*, Adelphi Paper 302 (London: Oxford University Press for the IISS, 1996), 14–15.

major initiative being the ASEAN Preferential Trading Arrangements (PTA). Signed in 1977, the Arrangement is designed to liberalize and enlarge intra-ASEAN trade utilizing means such as long term quantity contracts, liberalization of non-tariff measures on a preferential basis, exchange of tariff preferences, preferential terms for financing of imports, and preference for ASEAN products in procurement by government bodies. Another undertaking aimed at enhancing intra-ASEAN trade was the implementation of the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) in 1992. Aside from influencing intra-regional trading activities, the goals of AFTA include encouraging greater intra-ASEAN and foreign direct investment in the region, and promoting ASEAN as a competitive production base geared towards servicing the global market. Under AFTA, the original six ASEAN members are scheduled to cut tariffs to zero to five percent by 2002, with the newer members to follow — Vietnam by 2006, and Laos and Myanmar by 2008.

The second principal aspect of economic cooperation encompasses agreements on a range of regional projects and the emergence of economic "growth triangles." Broad consensus has been reached on ambitious regional propositions, such as the ASEAN Industrial Projects, ASEAN Industrial Joint Ventures, ASEAN Finance Corporation, and a host of other mutually beneficial economic enterprises. The adoption of the growth triangle concept has been praised for representing a more market-driven approach to regional economic cooperation by bringing together geographically contiguous areas within two or more states with natural economic complementarities. In Southeast Asia, at least

four such triangles have emerged: the Singapore–Johor–Riau (SIJORI) triangle; the Indonesia–Malaysia–Thailand Northern Growth Triangle; the East Asian Growth Area involving Sabah, Sarawak, and Labuan in Malaysia, North Sulawesi, East Kalimantan and West Kalimantan in Indonesia, and the Mindanao region of the Philippines and Brunei; and the growth quadrangle of mainland Southeast Asia, consisting of China's Yunnan province, Laos, Thailand, and Myanmar.[136]

The rapid advance of transnational economic linkages and cooperation within ASEAN has won acclaim for its positive implications for regional security. Attention has been drawn to a "virtuous cycle of national economic development, regional economic integration, and security" in which:

> ...economic interdependence and integration...contribute to economic growth and development of the region as a whole. As people's well-being in the region increases the region becomes more stable; this in turn improves the region's security.[137]

On the surface, there appears to be ample justification for concluding that the remarkable economic cooperation and prosperity of ASEAN as a whole has in no small measure contributed towards positioning the grouping in a way that will make it the leading region in the next century.[138] It has also prompted optimistic

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[136] Acharya, "A Regional Security Community in Southeast Asia?" 188.

[137] Hadi Soesastro, "Economic Integration and Interdependence in the Asia Pacific: Implications for Security," paper presented at the Eighth Asia Pacific Roundtable (note 68).

[138] Hussin Mutalib, "At Thirty, ASEAN Looks to Challenges in the New Millennium," *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, vol. 19, no. 1 (June 1997), 80.

forecasts that such transnational economic activity would create a structure of

interdependence that would, in turn, render the use of force less likely:

> The intricately interwoven economic ties binding states together will reduce
> incentives to resort to violence in resolving inter-state disputes. Given the
> disruptions that would occur to each state's economy, the costs of regional
> conflict are growing rapidly. Today and in the future, any war conducted
> with one's neighbors will penetrate deeply into the very marrow of one's
> own economic system.[139]

B.   ECONOMICS AND SECURITY

While the economic successes of ASEAN are undeniable, there is

nevertheless reason to moderate expectations. There is scant and contradictory

evidence supporting the widely held view about international relations in Southeast

Asia that as economic interdependence grows, conflict becomes less likely. The

logic of this liberal position is alluring: economic interdependence lowers the

probability of war by increasing the value of trading over the alternative of

aggression — interdependent states would rather trade than invade.[140] The

essence of liberal views is encapsulated in declarations such as:

> It is commerce that is rendering war obsolete, by strengthening and
> multiplying the personal interests that act in natural opposition to it. And it
> may be said without exaggeration that the great extent and rapid increase
> of international trade, in being the principal guarantor of peace of the world,

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[139] Robert A. Scalapino, "Challenges to the Sovereignty of the Modern State," in *The Making of a Security Community in the Asia-Pacific*, eds. Bunn Nagara and K. S. Balakrishnan (Kuala Lumpur: ISIS Malaysia, 1994), 50.

[140] The core arguments of the Liberal interpretation can be found in Richard Cobden, *The Political Writings of Richard Cobden* (London: T. Fischer Unwin, 1903); Norman Angell, *The Great Illusion* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1933); and Richard Rosecrance, *The Rise of the Trading State: Commerce and Conquest in the Modern World* (New York: Basic Books, 1986).

87

is the greatest permanent security for the uninterrupted progress of...the human race.[141]

However, realists reject this liberal argument, contending that high levels of interdependence can increase rather than decrease the likelihood of war.[142] Modern realist interpretation has its roots in seventeenth century mercantilist philosophy that envisaged states as locked in a competition for relative power and for the wealth underpinning such power. States dependent on others for critical economic supplies live in constant fear of cutoff or blackmail in times of crises or war. These states are, therefore, subject to the vulnerability that high interdependence entails — they seek to control what they rely on or to lessen the extent of their dependency, leading to greater security competition.[143]

The historical evidence is ambiguous. The various interactions of economics and war in history point to economic interdependence as being not only about the benefits of trade and investment, but also about the competition for markets and resources; that is, "interdependence carries the seeds of both cooperation and conflict."[144]

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[141] John Stuart Mill, quoted in Robert B. Zoellick, "Economics and Security in the Changing Asia-Pacific," *Survival*, vol. 39, no. 4 (Winter 1997–98), 30.

[142] The core arguments of the Realist interpretation can be found in Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1979); and John J. Mearsheimer, "Disorder Restored," in Graham Allison and Gregory Treverton eds., *Rethinking America's Security* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1992).

[143] Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1979), 106.

[144] Gerald Segal, "How Insecure is Pacific Asia?" *International Affairs* 73.2 (1997), 240.

In the case of Southeast Asia, an examination of regional economic episodes and trends demonstrates that presumed economic cooperation may not directly and unambiguously contribute to the development and maintenance of ASEAN as a regional security community. Indeed, the gains made in regional economic integration efforts may be exaggerated, and the economic challenges posed by the attainment of an ASEAN-10 may have huge divisive effects. A glimpse of the potential dangers inherent within the ASEAN economic system has been afforded by the Asian financial crisis, and this may portend difficult times ahead in ASEAN's quest towards attaining the status of a tightly coupled pluralistic regional security community.

C.   THE LIMITS OF REGIONAL ECONOMIC INTEGRATION

Notwithstanding the various economic initiatives ASEAN has embarked upon since its conception, the contribution of regional economic cooperation and interdependence to the emergence and maintenance of ASEAN as a regional security community could be overstated. Both the value and number of traded items in intra-ASEAN trade covered under the PTA are still modest and some states have experienced difficulties in coping with this new economic arrangement. The AFTA concept and the timetable for its implementation are already proving to be too ambitious and unrealistic owing to concerns over unequal distribution of its gains.

89

Despite AFTA and the growth triangles, economic regionalism in Southeast Asia remains quite limited in scope and poorly implemented. In particular, state-centric trade liberalization measures have not been effective in creating a noticeably high degree of regional interdependence. Intra-ASEAN preferential tariff arrangements have had a marginal impact in raising the level of intra-ASEAN trade as a proportion of total ASEAN trade, this consistently averaging about 20 percent of overall ASEAN trade over much of the 1990s as illustrated in Table 5.

Table 5. ASEAN Total and Intra-ASEAN Trade Statistics

Year	Intra-ASEAN Trade (US$m)	Total Trade (US$m)	% of Intra-ASEAN to Total Trade
1993	80,856	428,668	18.8
1994	104,118	514,006	20.2
1995	121,927	615,251	19.8
1996	141,280	673,913	20.9
1997	153,855	718,812	21.4
1998 (first half year)	58,044	294,236	19.7

Source: The ASEAN Secretariat, ASEANWEB, Available [Online]: <http://www.asean.or.id> [1 March 1999].

The commitment of ASEAN members to regional integration should not be unquestioned. While the diplomatic benefits of regional economic cooperation as a means of reducing intra-regional conflict are recognized, regional economic integration has never been a primary and consistent ASEAN goal. Indeed, it can be argued that trends indicate the most developed states are seeking global rather

than just regional connections,[145] while the ASEAN states themselves are wary of the harmful effects of regional integration on national economic development:

> ASEAN countries owe their economic prosperity to trade and investment links with the outside world. Measures in the name of regional integration that discriminate against more efficient producers can undermine this. ASEAN must continue to maintain its outward-looking orientation and remain competitive in world markets.[146]

Furthermore, transnational economic linkages in Southeast Asia are not an unambiguous blessing. The emergence of AFTA and the growth triangles might imply that traditional political rivalries and regional disputes are no longer sufficient barriers to serious attempts at economic cooperation. However, the growth triangles themselves harbor the potential of fostering greater intra- and inter-state tensions. Because they encompass only a small portion of national territories, the distribution of their benefits within and between participating states has become a politically sensitive issue. For example, the greater involvement of ethnic Chinese in the Johor and Riau segments of SIJORI has exacerbated inter-ethnic tensions in Malaysia and Indonesia. Similarly, sections within Malaysia and Indonesia see Singapore, which occupies only three percent of the land area within SIJORI but accounts for about half of its population and 90 percent of its income, as being the major beneficiary of the triangle.[147]

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[145] Marc Busch and Helen Milner, "The Future of the International Trading System," in *Political Economy and the Changing Global Order*, eds. Richard Stubbs and Geoffrey Underhill (Toronto: McLelland and Stewart, 1994), Chapter 15.

[146] Acharya, "A Regional Security Community in Southeast Asia?" 190.

[147] Ibid.

Such sentiments are in fact offshoots of the prevailing jealousy within many ASEAN societies over the seemingly disproportionate prosperity of certain ethnic groups. In the recent past, Chinese communities, especially in Indonesia, have been targets of violence because of their affluence or perceived service to China's overseas aims. Today, migrant Chinese in many of the ASEAN states continue to dominate national economic spheres,[148] thus generating internal societal stresses with the potential of spilling over to adjacent countries.

ASEAN regional integration efforts should, therefore, be noted for their conflict-creation as well as conflict-reduction potentials. The relatively low level of intra-ASEAN economic interdependence suggests that this may not act as the effective constraint envisaged by liberal theology, with detrimental consequences for ASEAN as a security community. As has already been pointed out, even if efforts continue to move forward, regional economic integration in itself is no guarantee of harmony and peace among the participants — higher levels of interdependence can produce political friction as well as amity.

D. THE ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF ASEAN EXPANSION

Much has been made of realizing ASEAN's vision of eventually incorporating all the states of Southeast Asia within the grouping. While such an objective has noble intentions, it has also raised economic issues ASEAN would

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[148] Zoellick, 41.

do well to heed. That a wide economic gap separates the original ASEAN members from the newer ones is undeniable. As Table 6 indicates, there exists a two, or even three, tier economic organization within ASEAN. This has already led to questions on inter-ASEAN assistance, real tests of the ideal of equality in economic decision making, and the need for concessionary dispensations for the economically weaker members.

Table 6. ASEAN Basic Statistics (1996)

Country	Year Joined ASEAN	Area (Sq. km)	Population (millions)	GDP ($US billion)	GNP per Capita ($US)
Brunei	1984	5,800	0.29	5.0 (1995)	14,620
Indonesia	1967	1,920,000	196.00	232.0	1,090
Laos	1997	236,800	5.03	1.9	380
Malaysia	1967	330,000	20.55	95.5	4,300
Myanmar	1997	676,600	45.90	N/A	N/A
Philippines	1967	299,400	70.04	83.3	1,190
Singapore	1967	620	3.03	92.1	30,240
Thailand	1967	514,000	58.70	186.0	3,020
Vietnam	1995	325,400	75.36	23.3	290

Source: World Bank, Available [Online]:

<http://www.asiasociety.org/publications/asean_statistics.html> [1 March 1999].

As ASEAN becomes increasingly susceptible to developing into a two-tier organization divided between its more prosperous older members and the poor Indochinese states and Myanmar, the risks to peace posed by more aggressive

economic competition and shifts in relative power become correspondingly heightened.

1. Complementarity versus Competition

For centuries, countries have believed they could enhance their power, resources, and population by territorial expansion. Mercantilism, colonialism, and imperialism altered the scramble for territory by adding the dimension of markets — markets to produce resources, markets to buy goods, and markets from which to exclude others.[149]

Today, the competition for resources and markets has taken on a different hue, although echoes of past decades continue to reverberate. Successful economies require competition, and competition produces winners and losers. As ASEAN countries move up the ladder of value-added production, they will increasingly challenge one another. From an economic perspective, there is no reason why this competition and integration cannot enhance regional living standards. From a political perspective, however, such competition can lead to friction and create strains.

While economic cooperation, and not ideological and security imperatives, has become the new locomotive for ASEAN solidarity, this cooperation, if not managed judiciously, can turn into rivalry and wasteful competition to the detriment of its members. Already, such contests have been manifested in, for instance,

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[149] Zoellick, 39.

Singapore–Malaysia rivalry in financial, shipping, and information technology ventures; the ambivalence of Indonesia–Malaysia cooperation in rubber and palm oil, of which they are the world's top two producers; and in the Philippines' rebuff of Malaysian investments in its hotel industry. These are but a few examples of the nature and extent of the problem.

The grandiose aims of AFTA will have uneven impacts on the individual states within ASEAN. Those states able to focus their energies on the export of manufactured products and skill- and capital-intensive goods and services such as telecommunications, electrical components, and computers will invariably have a greater competitive advantage than others.[150]

For the new members of ASEAN, the rapid economic changes demanded by the terms of membership will be painful. As free trade pries open borders across the region, cheap imports and competition are certain to eliminate centrally planned heavy industries in Vietnam and Laos and cause massive unemployment, while also destroying the region's traditional farming methods and encouraging mass migration to cities. ASEAN's attitude towards acknowledging this potential difficulty and assisting in making the transition less arduous has been dismissive, as adjudged by comments such as: "It's going to be painful...but if they want to join they simply have to abide by the rules...all of them."[151]

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[150] Mutalib, 82.

[151] "Tough Terms Set for Poor Indochina Joining Rich ASEAN," Available [Online]: <http://www2.nando.net/newsroom/ntn/world/121395/world806_5.html> [3 March 1999].

Hence, despite regular assurances from ASEAN leaders that intra-ASEAN economic relationships are characterized by "complementarity," the name of the game appears unequivocally to be "competition." This inescapable spiral in competition for goods and markets may generate new frictions and tensions within the enlarged group if adequate mechanisms are not put in place. The challenge for ASEAN then is to creatively turn and redirect competition elsewhere instead of between states within the grouping.[152] However, the track record of the organization thus far does not lead one to great expectations.

2. Differential Economic Growth and Power Adjustments

If countries in the region grow at different rates, the relative size of their economies will change. Throughout history, adjustments in comparative wealth and power have posed risks to peace. Rising powers may seek to redress historical grievances and demand the restoration of lost territories or peoples. If they seek to augment military capabilities, even if starting from modest levels, others may question motives and intentions. Ascending states are also prone to associating their acquired wealth and power to perceived unique virtues. Such assumptions can create an impression of destined moral and cultural superiority, of unique favor, that may be transfused into promoting an ideology or religion.[153]

It is therefore to be expected that the changing economic power of the Southeast Asian states will affect the hierarchic order and the distribution of power

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[152] Mutalib, 82.

[153] Zoellick, 36–37.

in the region. According to Kennedy, the power disposition of the leading nations in the world over the past five centuries has closely paralleled their relative economic position. The historical record also suggests a very clear connection, in the long run, between a great power's economic rise and fall and its military growth and decline.[154] It has been observed that periods of rapid change within and among nations create dangerous uncertainties and anxieties that can lead to miscalculations by political elites.[155] Arguably, Southeast Asia is undergoing just such a period of rapid political, social, and economic adjustment.

The responses of other states to emerging powers may also precipitate conflict. Those concerned with their relative position may place a greater priority on weakening a potential foe than on strengthening themselves. The mercantilist logic of power does not emphasize the generation of wealth — it stresses the strength of the state against others.[156]

ASEAN has followed an inclusive approach towards neighbors that would like to join. But it must be careful to assimilate other countries on the basis of certain standards. To do otherwise would mean ASEAN falling prey to internal tensions and ineffectiveness through a general lack of cohesion.

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[154] Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers* (London: Fontana Press, 1989), 693–698 and 566–567.

[155] Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), chapter 3.

[156] Zoellick, 37.

E. THE EXPERIENCE OF THE ASIAN FINANCIAL CRISIS

The recent Asian financial crisis has presented an opportunity for studying the impact of adverse economic conditions on the state of transactional relations within the ASEAN community. The event has demonstrated that doubts should indeed be raised as to the extent of cognitive transition and the level of mutual trust which individual ASEAN member-states have attained vis-à-vis one another.

Without a doubt, the Asian financial crisis has undermined economic confidence in the region, with potentially profound effects on the political and social cohesion of key ASEAN states. Table 7 indicates the magnitude of regional economic contraction. Between 1996 and early 1998, Indonesia's economy shrank in dollar terms by almost four-fifths, Thailand's by nearly half, Malaysia's by almost one-quarter, and the Philippines' by one-fifth.[157]

Table 7. Asia's Shrinking GDP

Country	GDP (constant 1995 US$bn)		% change 1996-1998
	1996	1998	
Indonesia	226	51	-77.4
Malaysia	92	71	-22.8
Philippines	84	68	-19.1
Singapore	94	92	-2.2
Thailand	186	97	-47.9

Source: "How Big is Asia?" The Economist, 7 February 1998, 72.

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[157] Paul Dibb, David D. Hale, and Peter Prince, "The Strategic Implications of Asia's Economic Crisis," Survival, vol. 40, no. 2 (Summer 1998), 14.

Within individual ASEAN states, the financial crisis has put the fundamental tenet of political leadership—the promise to deliver continued economic growth and material benefits to the people—at risk. The collapse of economic prosperity has threatened the basis for political stability across the region, the main concern being the prospect of political and social disintegration of Indonesia, the world's fourth most populous country. Indonesia's role as the natural leader and power center of ASEAN has now been placed in jeopardy.

Under President Suharto, who had ruled from 1967 to 1998, Indonesia was transformed from an economically and politically unstable archipelago, which caused considerable strategic anxiety to its neighbors, into the central pillar of ASEAN. In the wake of the economic meltdown, all these achievements have not simply been threatened, many have already been demolished. The country today is in a state of complete financial paralysis. Joblessness, poverty, and despair are lethal ingredients that have found avenues for expression in the form of an upsurge in ethnic and religious violence. Hostile anti-Chinese sentiment would have serious implications not least for neighboring Singapore and Malaysia. Muslim–Christian confrontations have been spurred by Islamic activists convinced that Muslims should assert their primacy in Indonesian business and politics — something which has not always been the case in a country with the world's largest Muslim population. Either way, violent upheaval in Indonesia would destabilize the security and economics of Southeast Asia through the accompanying outflow of refugees and the destruction of the confidence that has

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attracted foreign investments. The ongoing political and social turbulence generated by the financial crisis has revealed the stark realities of the dangers posed to thirty years of ASEAN stability, peace, and progress.

The economic crisis has also re-opened the door to secessionist movements. The increasingly explosive situations in East Timor, Aceh, and Irian Jaya are cases in point. In the Philippines, the fact that economic conditions in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao have not perceptibly improved has made it easier for the separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) to recruit disaffected Muslim youths. Fighting between the military and the MILF escalated dramatically following President Estrada's "If they want war, we'll give them war" remark,[158] with thousands fleeing their homes to escape the violence.

ASEAN's handling of the regional financial crisis as a grouping has also been adjudged wholly ineffective, with its collective actions and representations to the international community having very limited impression and its responses perceived as incoherent and ambiguous. Member countries have been themselves partly responsible for this, as several statements by individual leaders have been inconsistent with the organization's policies. There have been repeated criticisms of international currency manipulation in both the individual and collective statements of ASEAN leaders, in particular by Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir, as well as contradictory statements by regional leaders over the need for

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[158] "All-out Fighting Erupts in Mindanao," [Singapore] *The Straits Times*, 27 January 1999. Available [Online]: <http://www.straitstimes.asia1.com> [28 January 1999]. _

austerity programs and financial reforms.[159] In some cases, ASEAN countries have withdrawn investments from their neighbors.

At the 6th ASEAN Summit in Hanoi in 1998, ASEAN leaders endorsed a "Statement on Bold Measures," a package aimed at making member nations more enticing to investors and traders by accelerating trade liberalization and by offering various incentives. However, not all members have been completely happy about such intrepid ASEAN initiatives. In particular, the newer and poorer members—Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam—have voiced concerns about the accelerated liberalization plan.[160] The practical effectiveness of the measures has yet to be evidenced in concrete terms.

In terms of its effects on ASEAN, the economic crisis has made the grouping more distracted, inward-looking, and less cohesive. The crisis should have been viewed as a common foe for the members. Instead, they have been going their own separate and often conflicting ways in search of a solution. Little wonder then Prime Minister Mahathir's observation that "ASEAN's responses to the challenges confronting the region have created the impression of an ASEAN in disarray, its members at odds with one another."[161]

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[159] Funston, 30–32.

[160] Alejandro Reyes, "A 'Bold' Band of Brothers," *Asiaweek*, 25 December 1998. Available [Online]: <http://www. pathfinder.com/asiaweek> [20 January 1999].

[161] Quoted in Roger Mitton and Alejandro Reyes, "Hurting in Hanoi," *Asiaweek*, 25 December 1998. Available [Online]: <http://www. pathfinder.com/asiaweek> [20 January 1998].

These effects have been exacerbated by the uneven impact of the crisis in the region. Singapore has been relatively little affected (which has stirred up Malaysian resentment) and the Philippines and Malaysia are in better shape than Indonesia or Thailand. Instead of displaying solidarity and "we-ness" in these testing times, each of the countries has exhibited a competitive interest in differentiating itself from the others. Thailand argues that it was the first in and therefore will be the first out. The Philippines claims it has withstood the crisis better than all others because of economic reforms put in place in recent years. Malaysia says it is best placed because it has not needed to go to the International Monetary Fund.[162]

While all these controversies may eventually blow over, they underscore the fact that the foundations of three decades of presumably happy co-existence as members of the ASEAN family may not have been as deeply-rooted as may have been believed.

F.   CONCLUSIONS

Insofar as the economics-security dimension is considered, ASEAN can claim qualified, though tenuous, success as a security community. As it stands, there is a need to not only strengthen and secure ASEAN against a host of potential inter-member economic conflicts, but also develop a *modus vivendi* for

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[162] Funston, 33.

regional reconciliation between the communist and non-communist segments of Southeast Asia.

The relationship between economic development and security has traditionally played a large part in regional security and unity deliberations. In this regard, the experience of the Asian financial crisis is indeed to ASEAN's credit in that it has not unraveled because of these pressures. In fact, those ASEAN countries with sufficient financial resources have contributed generously to the rescue packages for Thailand and Indonesia, while considerable effort has been invested in establishing credit guarantee schemes on behalf of fellow members.

Nevertheless, the recent economic collapse has undermined the view that growing economic interdependence will prevent international conflict, increased uncertainty in the region's security outlook, and challenged regional cohesion. It may well alter the regional balance of power, as well as the relative status, influence, and military capabilities of individual countries. This may bring about a situation wherein specific countries in Southeast Asia are weakened materially and others perceive themselves as materially stronger. Peace may be threatened — there are historical links between economic deterioration, trade wars, and military conflict.[163] The limitations of ASEAN have been manifestly exposed by the inability of the region to work together on this crisis.

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[163] Dibb, Hale, and Prince, 22.

Although the economic slowdown and its attendant frictions have not compelled ASEAN members to resort to physical force, it is significant in that it has revealed underlying suspicions and animosities that can only serve to weaken the grouping. What is clear is that economic institution building alone does not have the ballast to sustain ASEAN as a viable tightly coupled pluralistic security community — political and military cooperation must be part of the overall equation. In this regard, as has been demonstrated in the foregoing chapters, there is still much for ASEAN to accomplish.

VI. CONCLUSION

That ASEAN has progressed far beyond the initial hopes of its founding fathers is indisputable, even more so in light of the dismal failures of all previous attempts at constructing indigenous regional institutions. Within the framework of international relations, the inter-state system in Southeast Asia is clearly not anarchic in the Hobbesian interpretation. In the face of diverse regional tensions for which military intervention may have, at some time or other, seemed an attractive proposition, there are discernible norms and principles geared towards the preservation of regional stability. To a degree unprecedented for regional sub-systems in the developing world, there is a conscious effort on the part of ASEAN states to eschew the use of force as an instrument of statecraft in settling intra-ASEAN disputes. In bringing about a measure of relative political stability, institutional cohesion, and economic prosperity to the region, ASEAN can justifiably flaunt its label as the "exemplar of the Asian way to peace and prosperity" presaging "the creation of wider regional organizations in both economic and security spheres."[164]

This thesis does not question the successes of ASEAN in these aspects. Instead, it has set out to scrutinize scholarly claims of the organization as having attained the status of a pluralistic regional security community. In this regard, it

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[164] Tim Huxley, "Southeast Asia in the Study of International Relations: The Rise and Decline of a Region," *The Pacific Review*, vol. 9, no. 2 (1996), 219.

has been demonstrated that while it is apparent that war is becoming an increasingly unattractive option for regional political elites, their articulations and behavior under various political and economic conditions does not unambiguously render war between ASEAN members impossible.

There is scanty empirical evidence that ASEAN members are contemplating, let alone in the process of attaining, a new common identity. It has never been a secret that ASEAN is composed of countries with decidedly different, and often competing, political and security values and perceptions. The tenets of the ASEAN Way and ongoing political friction between member-states have not encouraged the development of a political climate conducive to, and broad popular participation and support for, the rise of a security community. Southeast Asian arms purchases have increased, at times dramatically, and force modernization efforts are transforming regional militaries into forces with notable external capabilities, yet little progress has been made in promoting shared understandings and practices. The stabilization of a tightly coupled regional security community will ultimately be dictated less by achieving transparency with respect to missile and ship inventories than by transparency with respect to intentions, anxieties, and conceptions of military sufficiency — a cognitive metamorphosis which has yet to occur within ASEAN. The differential growth of regional states' capacities, in combination with historical animosities and lingering sovereignty disputes, perceived discrepancies between actual and appropriate levels of political status, and external interference, have acted in concert to create a continuing climate of

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uncertainty and apprehension. The Asian financial crisis has revealed significant underlying suspicions and animosities among ASEAN member-states and strong tendencies for member-states to go it alone in resolving crises, despite the rhetoric to the contrary. Efforts to revitalize the grouping have thus far been mediocre at best. A reversion to traditional self-help competitive approaches to security reflects the predominance of the individual nation-state as the security referent and is symptomatic of the degree to which the reality of primordial fears and the quest for national prestige and power will continue to dictate the evolution of the geopolitics of Southeast Asia well into the foreseeable future. These stand in stark contrast to the expected attitudes and behavior of political elites and masses within a tightly coupled security community, which should display popular acceptance of some degree of benefit and burden sharing within the community.[165]

The inductions derived from the analyses of the foregoing chapters, therefore, lead to a generalized conclusion that regional cooperative and integrative efforts are directed primarily at the instrumental or functional level. The practice of realpolitik—comprehended in terms of interest, necessity, and raison d'état—is alive and well in Southeast Asia. The underlying sentiment is such that the affairs of nations and the collisions of interests, passions, and ideals between peoples, under the right juxtaposition of conditions, may well still be decided by the

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[165] Deutsch, International Relations, 192.

implements of war and those who wield them. While these persist—against the backdrop of a plethora of complex intertwined factors and the empirical evidence that have been examined—it would appear that a climate of mutual trust and understanding that would act a as foundation for a tightly coupled security community will take many more years to evolve and stabilize. At this point of time, the many areas of contention, the lack of a shared vision for the region, and staunchly realist outlooks all mean that ASEAN can at most remain a fragile loosely coupled security community.

A few political entities have, in the course of history, succeeded in undergoing cognitive transformations and reducing the threat of some international conflicts to their existence and prosperity. However, it has been noted that in almost all cases, the foundations upon which such communities are built are shared history and geography. At the risk of oversimplification, images of a community, undergirded by shared history and culture, have evolved before the community's constituent members establish various institutions in conformity with the situation.[166] Therein perhaps lies the intrinsic difficulty of a multilateralist arrangement like ASEAN developing into a tightly coupled security community. The very notion of Southeast Asia as a unitary geopolitical entity is essentially a Eurocentric geographical contrivance. The region in fact encompasses huge diversity with no common or dominant cultural, religious, or ethnic identity, and, as

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[166] Watanabe and Kikuchi, "Japan's Perspective on APEC: Community or Association?" 136.

a consequence, no shared set of social, political, or security values. Moreover, governing elites are constantly mindful of domestic political considerations that frequently constrain and influence their courses of action. These conditions, together with the globalization of finance, information, and technology, which ASEAN economies must necessarily embrace, further inhibit the maturation of a cohesive regional ASEAN identity.[167]

Given such a historical, political, and social construct, self-help, in terms of national capabilities, will remain a crucial component of the ASEAN approach to security. For the present, at least, cooperative security and a very limited form of community security will be mere adjuncts to the national security strategies of Southeast Asian states. The observation that they will "supplement rather than supplant national capabilities and alliances"[168] still holds true.

The question remains: What of ASEAN's future as a pluralistic regional security community? One pragmatic approach would be to accept the innate imperfections and limitations of the organization and work simply to maintain the status quo. Certainly, as has been noted by numerous commentators, ASEAN has made considerable progress since its precarious foundations in 1967. Over the years, the regional institutional context and inter-state transactions have become denser and hence more consequential on individual state behaviors, thus

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[167] Gerald Segal, "Towards a Pacific Century?" in *Dilemmas in World Politics: International Issues in a Changing World,* eds. John Baylis and N. J. Rengger (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 414–417.

[168] Alagappa, 637.

bringing about a widening of the national strategies of ASEAN states. While strategies of self-help remain paramount, shifts towards a more cooperative regional effort are clearly discernible. Recognizing the limitations imposed by domestic political constituencies and the mindset of regional countries—focused as they are on unregulated competition among states and success defined as the preservation and strengthening of the state at the expense of the community—the fact that none of the ASEAN states has resorted to actual physical force against fellow members is a major achievement in itself. Although such cooperative efforts may be largely instrumental in nature and their motivations essentially selfish, these have served the organization well, and it would be unrealistic to expect ASEAN member-states to undertake the cognitive transitions required to further develop the community.

The major difficulty with this approach would be a real danger of ASEAN collapsing under the accumulated weight of conflict situations — both from past issues allowed to fester unresolved as well as new ones continually emerging from over the horizon. Already, as has been demonstrated by the foregoing analyses of political, military, and economic transactions, manifestations of the stresses and tensions buffeting the organization are all too perceptible, and these pose a direct and palpable threat to the very foundations of ASEAN as a viable community.

A second school of thought would advocate embracing the vision of evolving ASEAN into a tightly coupled regional security community. Security communities are not born with the traits of shared normative frameworks and a

transnational identity — they are created. Constructing a security community is a necessarily lengthy process involving a myriad of regional interaction and cooperative processes, generating social learning, socialization, and subsequently an increasing sense of regional civility.[169] Given that the prevailing commitment of Southeast Asian political elites to the realist core values of political independence and territorial sovereignty is due in large measure to their colonial and imperial experiences and their relatively recent liberation from domination,[170] time will be required to bring about paradigm changes. Because all the ASEAN states are relatively new as modern nation-states and are still in the midst of fundamental transitions, competition and conflict will continue to feature in the regional political landscape. However, a rising consciousness of the benefits of regionalism accounts for the present state within Southeast Asian countries of engaging in regional cooperation in the midst of ongoing development of national capabilities and continued participation in alliance arrangements. This transformation of the regional security problem from a sharply competitive zero-sum game into a mixed-motive game (competition and cooperation)[171] is an essential and promising step on the road toward the eventual establishment of a stable tightly coupled regional security community. The long term prognosis for developing and maintaining a viable tightly coupled security community will thus depend crucially on a delicate

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[169] Adler and Barnett, 90.

[170] Alagappa, 656–657.

[171] Ibid., 675.

balance being achieved between the forces promoting common identity among regional players, and those capitalizing upon identities of distinction. The main challenge for ASEAN is to move beyond mere rhetoric, transcend its present mode of state-to-state cooperation, and integrate its members into a more encompassing and cohesive community.

If the atmosphere of peaceful inter-state relations which has emerged within ASEAN is to be perpetuated and subsequently extended, policy-makers must be committed to addressing issues that relate directly to the requirements of a regional security community. These must include the multifarious political, military, and economic factors and ramifications, both present and potential, as have been outlined. While the instrumental nature of regional interaction achieved so far would qualify ASEAN as having attained the status of a loosely coupled security community, much remains to be accomplished before cognitive transitions can be fully realized to earn ASEAN the distinction of being a tightly coupled pluralistic security community worthy of serving as a model for other aspiring communities.

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113

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